A DICTIONARY OF CORRECT ENGLISH

M. ALDERTON PINK, M.A.

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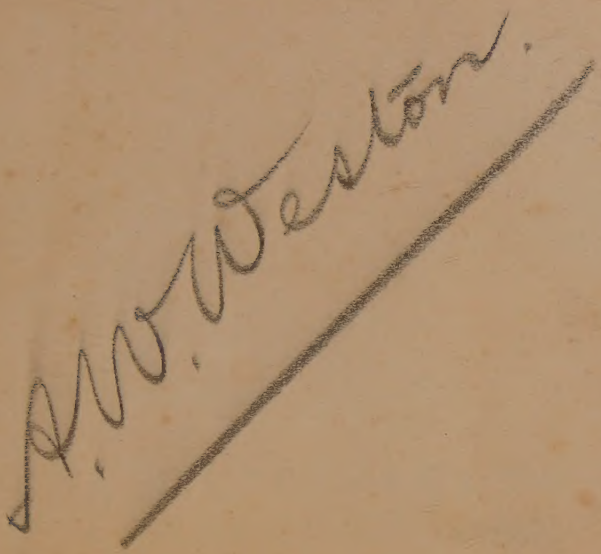

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A DICTIONARY OF CORRECT ENGLISH

A MANUAL OF INFORMATION AND ADVICE CONCERNING GRAMMAR, IDIOM, USE OF WORDS, POINTS OF STYLE, PUNCTUATION, SPELLING, AND OTHER PRACTICAL MATTERS

BY

M. ALDERTON PINK, M.A.

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PREFACE

THE purpose of this volume is to bring together in a convenient form all the miscellaneous information and advice that is of practical importance to the writer of everyday English. In selecting the material I have been guided by the results of several years' experience in preparing adult students for the various professional examinations. I have tried to deal only with those difficulties which I find do actually confront the inexperienced writer, and with those errors into which he is really liable to fall.

I have not assumed that the reader possesses any special knowledge of the technical terms of the art of writing, and I have therefore endeavoured to make every article completely intelligible either by itself or when read in conjunction with the other articles to which cross-references are given. In the explanation of grammatical errors, the misuse of words, etc., it is impossible to avoid using a certain number of technical terms and referring to the basic principles of grammar. These terms and principles are all explained as simply as possible in separate articles. I have not included any grammatical material that does not bear directly on the articles concerned with the practice of writing.

In illustrating faults in grammar and composition I have drawn, as far as possible, on examples collected from the newspapers, especially from the correspondence columns and the reports of company meetings.

No doubt many readers will see ways in which the usefulness of this book to them might be increased. I should welcome any suggestions and should endeavour to meet them in a later edition.

M. A. P.

CLASSIFIED LIST OF GENERAL ARTICLES

(NOTE: Articles on particular words are not mentioned in the following List unless they have special importance or illustrate some general principle.)

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(*NOTE : Although the grammatical material included has been selected for its bearing on the practical matters dealt with in the*

other articles and is intended chiefly for reference, it is sufficiently comprehensive to give the reader a good working knowledge of grammatical principles. For the understanding of these principles the following articles are of the utmost importance : they should be read in the order given—

Sentence ; Subject and Predicate ; Parts of Speech ; Articles on separate Parts of Speech ; Phrase ; Clauses ; Object (Direct and Indirect) ; Predicative Words ; Adjective-phrases and Adjective-clauses ; Adverb-phrases and Adverb-clauses ; Noun-clauses ; Simple Sentence ; Complex Sentence ; Double Sentence, Multiple Sentence ; Case ; Rules of Agreement.)

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KEY TO PRONUNCIATION

In order to indicate correct pronunciation the following symbols are used where necessary. Usually no attempt is made to give a complete phonetic rendering of a word; that is to say, no mark is put over a vowel unless there is likelihood of mispronunciation—

ā	pronounced	as in	bate
ār	,,	,,	bare
ă	,,	,,	bat
ē	,,	,,	be
ĕ	,,	,,	bet
er	,,	,,	berth
ī	,,	,,	bite
ĭ	,,	,,	bit
ō	,,	,,	note
ōr	,,	,,	bore
ŏ	,,	,,	not
ū	,,	,,	mute
ch	,,	,,	chat
th	,,	,,	thing

A syllable bearing the accent is shown by the mark (') placed after it; thus—en'ter, prefer', content'ment.

A DICTIONARY OF CORRECT ENGLISH

A, AN.

The general rule is that *an* is used instead of *a* before a vowel-sound or a silent *h*—an office, an honest man. Textbooks commonly state that *an* should also be used when the following word begins with an aspirated *h* in an unaccented syllable; thus—an historical novel, an habitual smoker. This rule is by no means generally observed to-day, and it is doubtful whether it should be insisted on. It used to be the practice to use *an* before words like *European, universal, one*—an European reputation, an universal system, such an one. But these words really begin with a consonantal sound, although they have an initial vowel letter, and *a* is now regularly employed in such cases. (See also ARTICLES.)

ABBREVIATIONS.

The following is a list of abbreviations in common use in business—

a/c, acct.	Account	B/E	Bill of Exchange
ad lib.	(Lat.: *ad libitum*) At pleasure	B/L	Bill of Lading
		B/P	Bill payable
ad val.	(Lat.: *ad valorem*) According to value	B/R	Bill receivable
		B/S	Balance sheet
		C/B	Cash Book
a/o	Account of	cf., cp.	Compare
a/or	And, or	c.f.	Cost and freight
A/D	After date	c.i.f.	Cost, insurance, and freight
A/s	Account Sales		
A/S	After sight	C.H.	Custom House

C/N . . Credit Note
c/o . . Care of
C.O.D. . Cash on Delivery
c/s . . Cases
C/P . . Carriage paid
cum div. . With dividend
C.W.O. . Cash with Order
D/A . . Documents against acceptance
D/D . . Days after date
deld., dd. . Delivered
Dft. . . Draft
D/N . . Debit Note
D/O . . Delivery Order
D/P . . Documents against payment
D/S . . Days after sight
d/y, dely. . Delivery
e.g. . . For example
Enclo(s) . Enclosure(s)
exd. . . Examined
ex div. / e.d. / x. div. } Exclusive of dividend
et seq. . . And that which follows
et sqq. . . And the things following
f.a.s. . . Free alongside ship
fcp., fcap. . Foolscap
f.o.b. . . Free on board
f.o.c. . . Free of charge
f.o.r. . . Free on rail
f.o.s. . . Free on steamer
f.o.t. . . Free on truck
fo., fol. . Folio
f'wd. . . Forward
G.M.Q. . Good Merchantable Quality
H.M.C. . His Majesty's Customs
Ibid. . . (Latin: *ibidem*) The same
i.e. . . (Latin: *id est*) That is
inst. . . Instant (that is, the present month)
Int. . . Interest

Inv. . . Invoice
I O U . . I owe you
M. . . . Monsieur (French)
M/D . . Months after date
Mem. / Memo. } Memorandum
Mlle. . . Mademoiselle (French)
Mme. . . Madame (French)
Messrs. . Gentlemen; Sirs (Fr.: messieurs)
mo. . . Month
M/S . . Months after sight
MS(S) . . Manuscript(s)
n/a . . No account (Banking)
N.B. . . North Britain (that is, Scotland) Take Notice (Lat.: *nota bene*)
n/s . . Not sufficient (Banking)
o/d . . On demand
On a/c . On account
o/p . . Out of print
O.R. . . Owner's Risk
O/S . . On sale; out of stock
per ann. / p.a. } (Lat.: *per annum*) By the year
per pro. / p. pro. / p.p. } (Lat.: *per procurationem*) On behalf of
pkg., pkge. Package
P. & L. . Profit and Loss
P.O.D. . Pay on Delivery
P.P. . . Parcel Post
pro. tem. . (Lat.: *pro tempore*) For the time being
prox. . . (Lat.: *proximo*) Next month
P.S. . . Postscript
P.T.O. . Please turn over
q.v. . . (Lat.: *quod vide*) Which see
r/d . . Refer to drawer (Banking)
R.P. . . Reply Paid

R.S.V.P. .	(Fr.: *Répondez s'il vous plaît*) Please reply	U.K. . .	United Kingdom
		ult., ulto. .	(Lat.: *ultimo*) Last month
Ster., Stg..	Sterling	viz. . .	(Lat.: *videlicet*) Namely
Tr. . .	Trustee		

ABSOLUTE PHRASES.

An Absolute Phrase is a group of words containing a noun or pronoun together with a participle, and having no grammatical connection with the rest of the sentence. (See PARTICIPLES.) Thus, in the sentence, " This being your decision, I have no more to say," the pronoun *this* is not the subject or the object of the verb *have*, nor does the participle *being* qualify any word outside its own phrase. *This being your decision* is therefore said to be " absolute," i.e. " set free." Other examples—

The shares having risen unexpectedly, many people are buying.

The business having been completed, the meeting adjourned.

For the punctuation of Absolute Phrases, see COMMA.

ACCEPTANCE—ACCEPTATION.

These words are now quite distinct in use. The *acceptation* of a word or phrase is its particular sense, its generally accepted meaning; e.g. The translator does not appear to use the term " genius " in its common *acceptation.*

Acceptance is a noun formed from the verb *accept* used in its ordinary sense; e.g. I beg your *acceptance* of this little gift. It is doubtful whether these views will ever find general *acceptance*. The company refused *acceptance* of the bill.

ACCESSORY.

The best authorities prefer the accent on the first syllable.

ACCOMMODATE.

Nine people out of ten spell this word wrongly.

ACCUSATIVE CASE.

(See CASE.)

ACQUIESCE.

Followed by *in*. The committee *acquiesced in* the chairman's proposal.

ACTIVE VOICE.

(See VOICE.)

ADEQUATE.

When a preposition is required after *adequate*, the correct one is *to*.

The resources of the company are *adequate to* provide the necessary capital for the new enterprise.

The bridges over the Thames are not *adequate to* the requirements of London's traffic.

ADJECTIVE.

An adjective is a word used to qualify, i.e. limit the meaning of, a noun or pronoun. Adjectives are used: (1) to describe: a *fine* day; a *heavy* bag; (2) to point out: *this* house; *that* book; (3) to ask questions: *What* time will suit you? (4) to indicate number: *two* men; *ten* ships; (5) to indicate order: the *first* post; (6) to express an indefinite number or amount: *few* people came; *other* men thought differently; *much* cry, *little* wool; (7) to show possession: *my* partner; *their* business.

ADJECTIVE-PHRASES AND ADJECTIVE-CLAUSES.

An *adjective-phrase* is a group of words which does not contain a subject and predicate, and which does the

work of an adjective. Thus, in the sentence, "The cover of the book is torn," the group of words *of the book* is equivalent to an adjective qualifying *cover*. Other examples—

A bird *in the hand* is worth two *in the bush*.
I found Jones *sitting by the fire*.

An *adjective-clause* is a part of a complete sentence; it contains a subject and predicate of its own, and acts as an adjective qualifying a noun. Thus, in the sentence, "The house which you mentioned is sold," the group of words *which you mentioned* contains a subject (*you*) and a predicate (*mentioned which*), and it is equivalent to an adjective limiting the meaning of *house*. Other examples—

We dislike people *whose opinions differ from our own*.
This happened in the days *when I was young*.

(See CLAUSES; PHRASE; SUBJECT AND PREDICATE.)

ADMIRABLE.

Pronounced with the accent on the first syllable.

ADMIT.

May be followed by *of*. Such conduct does not *admit of* excuse.

ADVERB.

Adverbs are words used to qualify, i.e. limit the meaning of, verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs. They may sometimes qualify prepositions and conjunctions. Many adverbs are formed from adjectives by adding *-ly*. *Happy* (adj.), *happily* (adv.). Examples—

He works *hard* (*hard* qualifies the verb *works*).
It is a *very* difficult task (*very* qualifies the adjective *difficult*).

She acts *extremely* well (*extremely* qualifies the adverb *well*).

Simple adverbs denote time (Come *now*) ; place (Stay *there*) ; manner (He plays *badly*) ; reason (*Therefore* I cannot agree) ; degree (He was *completely* overcome) ; order (*Secondly*, I wish to ask . . .). Adverbs are also used to ask questions (*Why* are you late ?), and to connect clauses (Is that the house *where* he lives ?)

ADVERB-PHRASES AND ADVERB-CLAUSES.

An *adverb-phrase* is a group of words which does not contain a subject and predicate, and which does the work of an adverb. Thus, in the sentence, " The letter was written in a hurry," the group of words *in a hurry* is equivalent to an adverb of manner qualifying the verb *was written*. Other examples—

He walked *through the office.* I will come *in a minute.*

An *adverb-clause* is a group of words containing a subject and predicate of its own, and performing the function of an adverb. Thus, in the sentence, " I will go because you ask me," the group of words *because you ask me* contains a subject (*you*) and a predicate (*ask me because*), and it is equivalent to an adverb of cause qualifying the verb *will go*. Adverb-clauses belong to various kinds. They may express : (1) time (He went *when he had finished*) ; (2) place (Stay *where you are*) ; (3) cause (*As he was not there*, I went home) ; (4) purpose (He argues *in order that he may convince you*) ; (5) result (He argues so much *that he wearies you*) ; (6) condition (*If he calls*, I shall not see him) ; (7) concession (*Although he works hard*, he takes an interest in sport) ; (8) comparison (He behaved *as he always does* ; You are older *than I am*). (See CLAUSES ; PHRASE ; SUBJECT AND PREDICATE.)

ADVERBS : THEIR POSITION IN A SENTENCE.

Care should be exercised in placing adverbs or adverb-equivalents in a sentence, for wrong placing either ruins the sense or violates idiom. It is clear that the sentence, "He *almost* resigned all his appointments," means something different from "He resigned *almost* all his appointments." The first says that he did not resign, and the second that he did : the change is due to the position of *almost*. Consider also the following sentence : "He did *not* carry out the work because it was necessary, but because he wished to gratify his vanity." Here *not* is placed so that it qualifies the verb *carry out* ; but the sense intended is that he did in fact carry out the work, though for a personal reason. *Not* should come before *because*.

When an adverb is used with a compound verb-form, i.e. one containing an auxiliary verb (has done, shall be coming, etc.), it should be placed immediately after the auxiliary (e.g. He has *often* done it). The following sentences are unidiomatic : If this *indeed* has happened, you must act. We *earnestly* have desired to remedy the evil. (Write : has indeed happened ; have earnestly desired.)

Again, in a sentence containing a transitive verb and an object, the adverb or adverb-phrase should not come between the verb and the object. The following sentences are faulty : After a few days he mastered *completely* the situation. (Write : completely mastered.) This is a question that affects *seriously* the whole staff. (Write : seriously affects.) Similarly the adverb-phrase is wrongly placed in—Applicants must possess *in a high degree* ability in salesmanship. (Move the phrase to the end.)

For the misplacing of *only*, see ONLY.

For the placing of adverbs used with infinitives, see SPLIT INFINITIVE.

AERATED.

Pronounced with four syllables—ā'-er-āt'-ed.

AFFECT—EFFECT.

Affect is a verb, and has two distinct uses—

(1) It means *to assume*; *to pretend to have, to feel,* or *to do*: He *affected* a cultured manner of speech. In spite of his annoyance he *affected* a haughty indifference. I *affected* to approve of the plan although I disliked it.

(2) It means *to attack*; *to touch the emotions*; *to produce an effect on.* Rheumatism *affects* people living in damp localities. I was deeply *affected* by her tale of misery. Thousands of people are *affected* by the floods.

Effect is both a noun and a verb. As a verb it means *to bring about; to achieve.* At length he *effected* his purpose. The fugitive *effected* his escape. The firm has *effected* a new insurance.

AGGRAVATE.

Aggravate is used colloquially to mean *annoy, exasperate.* Its true meaning is *make worse* or *more serious*: The bad climate *aggravated* his disease. The sudden reduction of our staff *aggravates* the difficulty of our situation. The word should be used only in this sense when it is employed in writing.

AGREEMENT.

(See RULES OF AGREEMENT.)

AIM.

Aim should be followed by *at*: We are *aiming at* exceeding last year's figures. It is incorrect English to say "aiming to exceed," though this is the recognized American usage.

ALIAS.

Pronounced: ā'lĭăs.

ALIBI.

Pronounced : ă'lībī.

ALLY, ALLIES.

Pronounced : ăllī', ăllīz'.

ALRIGHT.

This word is not to be found in English dictionaries. The colloquial expression " all right " (He seems all right after his holiday) should be so spelt when used, but it should be avoided in serious writing.

ALSO.

Also is an adverb and not a conjunction ; accordingly it should not be used alone after a comma instead of *and*, or *and also*, or *as well as*. Such sentences as the following are slovenly : We wish to give our customers full information about our activities, *also* every facility for examining our goods. In investigating the depression in the cotton industry we note the high prices of the raw material, *also* the changes in fashion. (Write : *and also*, or *as well as*, in both cases.)

It is inelegant to begin a sentence with *also*, although this is very commonly done. It is better to put this word in the middle of the sentence, or to replace it by connectives like *moreover, again*.

ALTERNATIVE.

The following notes (based on the *Oxford English Dictionary*) may serve to elucidate the idiomatic uses of the noun *alternative*—

1. In its original and strict sense *alternative* means a permission to choose between two things ; e.g. the garrison had the alternative of surrender or starvation.

2. In modern English either of the two things to be chosen may be called an alternative, and we may thus

speak of the *two alternatives*; e.g. the garrison was faced with the two alternatives, surrender and starvation; the garrison decided on surrender, for the alternative was starvation; the garrison had either to surrender or starve; there was no other alternative.

3. *No alternative* may mean practically *no choice*; e.g. the garrison had no alternative but to surrender.

4. *Alternative* may also be applied to any one of *several* things that may be chosen. Thus Gladstone wrote: "My decided preference is for the fourth and last of these alternatives." (This usage used to be condemned by the older textbooks; but it is now firmly established).

AMBIGUITY.

(See OBSCURITY.)

AMENABLE.

Followed by *to*. He was dismissed because he was not *amenable to* discipline.

AND WHICH, AND WHO.

Sentences like the following should be avoided—

> He is a man highly respected in the City, *and who* can be relied on to carry out his engagements.

What is the function of the conjunction *and* here? As is explained in the article on Relative Pronouns, *who* is itself a conjunction as well as a pronoun, and therefore no other connective is needed to introduce the second clause. The *and* would be required if the sentence were put in this form—

> He is a man *who is* highly respected in the City, *and who* can be relied on. . .

Here the function of *and* is to connect two relative

clauses referring to the same antecedent. The correct type of sentence-structure in such cases is :

Antecedent (relative clause) *and* (relative clause).

Another example of the error—

A Rembrandt, reported to be a very fine example of the master's work, *and which* has until lately been in the collection of a wealthy connoisseur, is now for sale. (Write : which is reported.)

A worse instance of the fault is the following—

A new road has been under construction for some months, *and which* will most probably be opened in the autumn.

Here it is not possible to introduce another relative clause referring to *road*. Replace *which* by *it*.

Similar mistakes are made in the use of *but who*, *but which*.

ANTITHESIS.

(See EMPHASIS.)

ANYBODY, ANYONE.

These words stand for single persons and should not, therefore, be followed by plural words referring to them. The following are incorrect : Would *anybody* in *their* senses say such a thing ? *Anyone* can now make *their* choice. (Substitute *his* in both cases.)

APOSTROPHE.

The apostrophe is used to mark the omission of a letter (It's raining), or to indicate the genitive (possessive) case. (See CASE.)

The genitive case of a noun is formed in the singular by adding *'s* to the nominative : *clerk, clerk's*.

In the plural it is formed—

(*a*) By adding an apostrophe only to the nominative plural, when that form ends in *-s* or *-es* : *the directors, the directors' fees ; the horses, the horses' food.*

(*b*) By adding *'s* to the nominative plural, when that form does not end in *-s* : *the men, the men's wages.*

For difficulties in the use of *'s*, see GENITIVE PROBLEMS.

APPALLING.

Appalling means *terrifying, dismaying.* It is correctly used in such a sentence as : The attacking troops were met by heavy fire, and they sustained *appalling* losses. In talk we employ the word with no thought of its real signification (What an *appalling* day ! His manners are perfectly *appalling*). The careful writer has few occasions for the use of this word.

APPOSITION.

When two nouns name the same person or thing, and one limits the meaning of the other, they are said to be *in apposition.* Thus, in " I met Mr. Smith, the foreman," *the foreman* is in apposition to *Mr. Smith.* Besides nouns, any noun-equivalents can be in apposition.

APPRECIABLE—APPRECIATIVE.

Appreciable means *capable of being appreciated* or *estimated* : There is no *appreciable* difference between the two colours. The rainfall was so small as to be hardly *appreciable.*

Appreciative means *showing appreciation ; estimating aright* : Actors are stimulated by *appreciative* audiences. He is always *appreciative of* kindness.

ARCHAISMS.

Why does the correspondent in the local newspaper delight to " comment on the remarks of Mr. So-and-So

anent such-and-such a subject"? Is he merely trying to avoid the obvious "with regard to," "with reference to," or simply "on"; or does he imagine he is exhibiting one of the graces of style? The inexperienced writer may be warned not to yield to the temptation to sprinkle his pages with obsolete expressions such as: *albeit, ere, erstwhile, oft, perchance, proven, thereof, thereto, well-nigh, withal.* Their effect on the reader is apt to be merely irritating. In the course of centuries many words have decayed and died. Sometimes they are wakened to new life by a poet, but it is not decent for the writer of workaday prose to drag them from their graves.

The use of archaic expressions, generally together with circumlocution, is a common trick of writers who aim at humorous description. The effect is usually feeble. The following example is, perhaps, less objectionable than most—

> By the middle of December, as Selina stuck her nose cautiously out of the covers into the midnight blackness of early morning, you might have observed, if it had been at all light, that the tip of that elegant and *erstwhile* alabaster feature had been encarmined during the night by a mischievous brush wielded by that same *wight* who had been busy painting fronds and lacy ferns and gorgeous blossoms of silver all over the bedroom window.

ARCHIVES.

Pronounced: ar'kīves.

ARRANGEMENT OF WORDS.

As several other articles deal with particular problems concerning the arrangement of words in sentences, it is not necessary to do more here than to insist that few matters require more care than the ordering of the parts of a sentence. The writer who aims at clearness and

vigour must so build up his sentence that every part has its definite place in the plan, and every word makes its contribution to the general effect. Misplacement of words or groups of words leads to obscurity, false emphasis, and faulty rhythm. Full discussion of these matters will be found under ADVERBS: THEIR POSITION IN A SENTENCE; EMPHASIS; RULE OF PROXIMITY; RHYTHM.

ARTICLES (*A, AN, THE*).

A (*an*) is called the Indefinite Article, and *the* the Definite Article. For the uses of *an* see A, AN.

Note that, if two separate persons or things are meant, the article must be repeated before the second. "Not the same qualifications are required for a works manager and foreman" is incorrect if two people are referred to. Write: a works manager and *a* foreman.

AS.

Mistakes are frequently made, especially in conversation, in the use of pronouns following *as*; e.g. My brother is as rich as *him*. The correction becomes obvious if the understood verb is supplied: My brother is as rich as *he* (is). The pronoun should be in the nominative (not accusative) case, because it is subject of (*is*). It should be observed that *as* is a conjunction and not a preposition. (See CASE.)

AS GOOD (AS) OR BETTER THAN.

(See OMISSION OF NECESSARY WORDS.)

AS MUCH (AS) IF NOT MORE THAN.

(See OMISSION OF NECESSARY WORDS.)

ASSET.

Asset is a word that receives very bad treatment nowadays at the hands of journalists and others. *Assets*

(with the -*s*) is a technical term, meaning property which balances or should balance liabilities. Careless writers however, use *asset* constantly for any sort of possession or advantage, or for an idea vaguely connected with advantage ; e.g. In spite of the lightness of this machine, its great *asset* is its strength. (Substitute : advantage, merit.) Mr. Smith is a great *asset* to the local Labour Party. (Substitute : pillar of.) In proposing a vote of thanks to Mr. Justice Sankey at a public meeting of the Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society, Sir Henry Jackson expressed the view that it was a tremendous *asset* to have a man with great qualities of head and heart presiding. (Substitute : advantage.)

ASSIGNEE.

Pronounced : assĭnē'.

AS TO.

Writers nowadays constantly make use of *as to* either quite unnecessarily or in place of some other preposition. In the following examples *as to* is superfluous and should be omitted—I am doubtful *as to* whether I ought to go. I am wondering *as to* how long it will take. The committee will consider the question *as to* whether the grant can be made.

In the following sentences the preposition given in brackets should be substituted : He seems to have no notion *as to* (*of*) the powers he possesses. No information can be given *as to* (*about*) the prospects of the firm.

ATTORNEY.

Pronounced : atter'ney.

AUGUR.

The following sentences exemplify the idioms in which this verb may be used : I do not *augur much*

good to the firm from the new policy. From the first he had *augured ill of* the scheme. The reports of recent sales *augur well for* the future prosperity of the firm.

AUXILIARY VERB.

An auxiliary verb is one that is used with another verb in a compound form. Thus, certain forms of the verb " to write " contain the auxiliary verb " to have " —I have written, I had written, etc.; other forms contain the auxiliary verb " to be "—I am writing, it is written, etc. The auxiliary verbs are—*be, have, do, may, might, shall, will, should, would.*

AVERSE.

According to modern usage either *from* or *to* may follow *averse* and *aversion.* The manager seems *averse to* the proposal. The directors are not *averse from* giving him full powers.

BECAUSE.

(See REASON WHY . . . BECAUSE.)

BETWEEN.

Notice that we must say " *between* one thing *and* (not *or*) another." The following is incorrect: He was forced to choose between resigning his post immediately *or* receiving dismissal (*and*).

BLAME.

It is a vulgarism to say, " He tried to blame it on to me." The correct idioms are: He tried to put the blame on me; He said I was to blame; He tried to blame me.

" BUSINESS ENGLISH."

On the matter of the meaningless jargon generally known as " Business English " or " Commercial English," there are some interesting and important comments in

the report on " The Teaching of English in England " (1921), issued by the Departmental Committee appointed by the Board of Education. We may first quote the samples of the dialect as they are there given : *prox.* (next month) ; *ult.* (last month) ; *inst.* (this month) ; *of even date* (of to-day) ; *beg to* or *hereby beg to* (a meaningless prefix found before verbs of all kinds, e.g. " I beg to inform you," " hereby beg to say," etc.). *Your favour, your esteemed favour, yours* (your letter) ; *I am in receipt of your favour, your favour duly to hand,* or more familiarly, *yours to hand* (your letter has reached me) ; *per* (by) ; *as per* (in accordance with) ; *same* (it, e.g. " Yours to hand and we beg to say we shall give all attention to same ") ; *make* or *quote you* (make an offer, e.g. " We can make you a discount of 6 per cent," " My traveller had the pleasure of quoting you for the order ") ; *the favour of your immediate reply will oblige* (I shall be glad to hear from you at once).

After having received the evidence of representative business men, the Committee reports " that ' Commercial English ' is not only objectionable to all those who have the purity of the language at heart but also contrary to the true interests of commercial life, sapping its vitality and encouraging the use of dry, meaningless, formulae just where vigorous and arresting English is the chief requisite." Fortunately, the use of this special jargon is already on the wane. The chief business houses are taking the lead in showing that the ordinary resources of the English language are quite adequate to the needs of commerce ; and it is to be hoped that before long " Business English " will be dead.

BUT.

When *but* means *except* it is a preposition, and should be followed by an accusative case. Nobody met him but *me* ; I met nobody but *him.* (See CASE.)

When *but that* is used to introduce a noun-clause a following negative is not required. Who knows *but that* when the business has been re-organized increased profits may *not* be made? (Omit *not*.)

When *but* is used as a conjunction, it should not be followed by *however*. He seemed almost powerless; *but* one course, *however*, still lay open to him. (*However* is superfluous.)

BUT WHICH, BUT WHO.

(See And Which, And Who.)

CANNOT HELP BUT.

To say "I *cannot help but* think you are wrong" is to employ a meaningless phrase which is the result of confusing two idioms—(1) I cannot but think you are wrong; (2) I cannot help thinking you are wrong.

CANVAS—CANVASS.

Canvas is the name of the material; *canvass* means *to solicit votes or orders*.

CASE.

So many errors in English are due to wrong use of cases that it is most important to grasp what is meant by "case." The essential principles are quite simple, but they must be thoroughly understood before they can be applied. In the notes here given only such points are explained as have a practical value for the ordinary writer of English.

A noun or a noun-equivalent (e.g. a pronoun) is said to be in a certain "case" according to its relationship to other words in the sentence. If we consider the sentence, "I posted the letter for my brother," we see that *I* is the subject, *letter* is the object, and *brother* is governed by the preposition *for*. *I* is therefore said to

CIRCUMLOCUTION (PERIPHRASIS).

Circumlocution, or Periphrasis (pronounced: perĭf'-răsis)—saying things in a roundabout way—is a favourite device of the feeble writer who wishes to avoid the obvious even when the obvious is inevitable. There is really no virtue in writing: "With the British Isles situated on the western flank of a large Continental anticyclone, *the prospects of considerable periods of genial holiday weather are by no means negligible.*" All that is meant is that considerable periods of fine weather are likely. Nor did the writer of the following passage (in the correspondence column of the *Daily Telegraph*) achieve an admirable distinction of style: "Many people ask why plover's eggs should be consigned to the exigencies of egg-destroying weather; to the *furtive ravages of the thieving corvine tribe and of sundry rodents of ill-repute*; and to the requirements of farmers in the matter of rolling their arable lands." It is annoying to the reader to have to paraphrase "the furtive ravages of the thieving corvine tribe" into "the ravages of crows," and then to be left wondering whether the "sundry rodents of ill repute" are rats and rabbits.

Financial journalists deserve sympathy in their unenviable task of giving the appearance of novelty to facts which must be the same from day to day; but, from the point of view of style, there is nothing to be said for "Business remains conspicuous by its absence," and "Business in the share market has approached the irreducible minimum" as variants of "There is little or no business."

It is a sound rule never to use several words when one will do. To substitute "in the event of" for "if" (In the event of your agreeing to our proposal . . .), and "in view of the fact that" for "as" (In view of the fact that our arrangements are not yet complete . . .), and so on, produces inflation, but not dignity of style.

CLAUSES.

Some sentences consist of two or more groups of words, each containing its own subject and predicate. (See SUBJECT AND PREDICATE.) Such word-groups are called clauses. The following sentence contains four clauses; they are separated by vertical lines—

When the boy returns, | I will send him to inquire | whether the secretary has received the letter | that he is expecting.

The clause which states the main fact is: I will send him to inquire. This is called the *main clause*. The other groups of words, though each having a subject and a verb, depend for their meaning on the main clause: they are therefore called *subordinate clauses*. A subordinate clause is equivalent to either a noun, an adjective, or an adverb. Thus, in the above example, "whether . . . letter" acts as a noun used as the object of the infinitive "to inquire"; "that . . . expecting" acts as an adjective qualifying "letter"; "When . . . returns" acts as an adverb of time qualifying "will send." Subordinate clauses are introduced by conjunctions like *that, when, where, because, if, since, whether*, or by relative pronouns (*who, which, that, what*).

(See ADJECTIVE-PHRASES AND ADJECTIVE-CLAUSES; ADVERB-PHRASES AND ADVERB-CLAUSES; NOUN-CLAUSES; COMPLEX SENTENCE; DOUBLE SENTENCE, MULTIPLE SENTENCE.)

CLICHÉS.

(See HACKNEYED PHRASES.)

CLIENTELE.

This word is often given the French pronunciation, as well as the French spelling (*clientèle*). The *Oxford English Dictionary* gives the pronunciation: klīĕntēl', and it is to be hoped that this will become universal. The word is now thoroughly English.

CLUMSY CONSTRUCTIONS.

In this article are collected a number of typical sentences which, while not necessarily grammatically inaccurate, annoy the reader through some clumsiness of construction.

1. The chief obstacle to trade recovery *was* trade barriers which impeded the free flow of labour, capital, and goods.

Here the reader at first sight probably says, "Should not *was* be *were*?" Actually *was* is correct, for it should agree with its subject *obstacle*. But this feeling of awkwardness and incorrectness will always be produced in a sentence containing a singular subject (*obstacle*) and a plural predicative noun (*barriers*), or *vice versa*. (See PREDICATIVE WORDS.) It is well, therefore, to avoid such a sentence-form, if possible.

2. The portion of the locomotive *which* requires the greatest degree of accuracy in its production is the valve-gear, *which*, as its name denotes, is the mechanism *which* actuates the movement of the valves *which* control the admission and exhaust of the steam to and from the cylinders.

The succession of relative pronouns referring to different antecedents is unpleasant to the ear.

3. Constructions like the following have a great vogue nowadays—

Owing to his (him) being unable to be present, the meeting was postponed.

In the event of his (him) being unable to be present, the meeting will be postponed.

His action resulted in the meeting being postponed.

More often than not, sentences like the first two are made grammatically wrong by the use of *him* for *his*. The third sentence contains a similar error. (See CONFUSION OF PARTICIPLE AND GERUND.) But, in any case, these examples surely exhibit extremely awkward

variants of the simple expressions: As he was unable to be present . . .; If he is unable to be present . . .; His action caused the meeting to be postponed.

COGNIZANT.

Followed by *of*. When I made the remark quoted by the last speaker, I was not *cognizant of* all the facts.

COLLECTIVE NOUN.

A collective noun is the noun of a group of persons or things, e.g. *crowd, government, flock.* For difficulties in the agreement of collective nouns, see ERRORS IN AGREEMENT.

COLLOQUIALISMS.

One of the first lessons that inexperienced writers have to learn is that the written language is by no means identical with the spoken language. Literary English is an artificial product free from the undesirable features of conversational language. This is not to say that there is a complete divorce between written and spoken English; many great writers (e.g. Hazlitt) have aimed at imitating the ease of good conversation. Ordinary talk, however, is unfit to be reproduced in writing because it naturally tends to be slipshod in grammar and the use of words. Besides containing slang (an extreme form of colloquialism), it is generally full of expressions like the following, all of which have special colloquial senses: What *beastly* weather! That is a *sweet* hat. He won by a *fluke.* He was *badly let down* at the interview. *Lots of people* were there. He is *out to* get more customers.

It is this careless use of words which is apt to intrude itself into writing, especially in these days when colloquialisms abound in the articles of popular newspapers. Guard against using the colloquial "different *to*" instead of "different *from*," and "a lot of" in place of

" much " or " many." Do not use " thing " as a substitute for a noun which you cannot think of without some trouble, and do not make " nice " similarly do duty for some more precise adjective. " Idea " is a word badly misused in conversation: it is worth while to refer to the dictionary for its true meanings. The colloquial " you " (meaning " anybody," " people in general "), should generally be avoided in serious writing, although its use is becoming common in journalism.

Not only are words misused, but mistakes in grammar are commonly made in conversation. Some of these errors are vulgar, but others are heard even in educated speech. " Like " is wrongly used as a conjunction (I wish I could sing *like* (as well as) he can); " than " is used as a preposition although it is really a conjunction (He is older than *me* (I)); the relative pronoun " which " is employed without a clear antecedent (He told me that I was careless, *which* was most unfair); " nobody," " everybody," etc., are incorrectly treated as plural (Everybody has a right to *their* opinion). We may whisper that Jane Austen constantly treated " everybody " as plural, that Thackeray often wrote " different to," and that Thomas Hardy regularly split his infinitives. It may be that these and other colloquial uses will eventually become so well established in the speech of the educated classes that the rules of grammar will be modified to meet such cases. In the meantime, however, writers who are in no danger of becoming standard authors should eschew expressions which contravene grammatical rules.

COLON.

The colon (:) marks a longer pause than any other stop except the full stop. It is used—

1. To separate the two parts of a double sentence when the second part explains or amplifies the statement

made in the first. (See DOUBLE SENTENCE, MULTIPLE SENTENCE.) E.g.—

He is very well suited for the appointment : he has wide technical knowledge, and he has had experience in handling men.

The sound of wheels or the din of machinery was hardly known in the island : all went barefoot about the house, and scarcely in the world could there have been found a deeper silence than in Stevenson's house in the forest.

Great difficulty is likely to be encountered during the passage of the bill : vested interests of various kinds are doing their best to mobilize the opposition.

Notice that the conjunctions *and, but, for* are not used after a colon.

2. Before a list of items—

The library is rich in several branches of literature : biography, poetry, travel, and drama.

3. Sometimes before a quotation—

Just then Smith's voice was heard above the general talk : " You can't get rid of the man like that ! "

(See PUNCTUATION : GENERAL HINTS.)

COLOSSAL.

Colossal means *gigantic ; of enormous size.* It is often carelessly used, especially in talk. It is such a strong word that in its true sense it does not fit many contexts.

COMMA.

The comma (,) marks a short pause. It is used—

1. To separate words or phrases forming a series—

His desk was covered with books, papers, and letters.

He acts as secretary of the cricket club, chairman

of the debating society, and producer for the dramatic club.

Nowadays we may travel by rail, by car, or by aeroplane.

2. To mark off words and phrases like *in fact, of course, no doubt, therefore, for instance*—

His remarks, in fact, were most annoying.

He thought, of course, that I should be afraid to reply.

3. To mark off (*a*) words used in address, (*b*) words in apposition (see APPOSITION), (*c*) phrases containing participles and requiring a pause in the reading—

(*a*) I will explain, my lord, as well as I can.

(*b*) Thomas Hardy, the greatest English writer of modern times, died in 1928.

(*c*) Having received your explanation, I am satisfied.

The necessary preparations having been completed, the expedition is about to set out.

At last the garrison, finding further resistance hopeless, determined to surrender.

4. In complex sentences, to separate clauses *when a pause would naturally be made in the reading.* (See COMPLEX SENTENCE)—

Although I thought you would come, I did not expect you so soon.

Many imagined that labour troubles were over for a time, and that trade would recover.

I gave the letter to the office-boy, who posted it.

5. In double sentences, to separate the two parts when the subject of the second clause is expressed. (See DOUBLE SENTENCE, MULTIPLE SENTENCE)—

At first he seemed to be nervous, but he soon gained sufficient confidence to acquit himself well.

(See COMMA MISUSED and PUNCTUATION : GENERAL HINTS.)

COMMA MISUSED.

The comma is such an important stop that, besides giving the rules for its use, we may usefully collect some typical examples in which it is misplaced—

1. "The distinction between the two types, is a sure guide to the relative superiority of each system." A comma should not be used, as here, to separate the subject of the sentence from its verb.

2. "His professional duties require that he should report only, what the statesman said and what his audience thought of him." A comma is not used before a noun-clause. The regular practice would be to omit the comma after *only*, and to insert one before *and* to mark off the second noun-clause from the first.

3. "I will have no more dealings with a man, who treats his clients in such a fashion."

"The proper treatment of war news is the most serious problem, which a newspaper has to face."

Omit the comma in both cases. Relative clauses should be preceded by a comma only when *who* or *which* can be replaced by *and he, and it, and they*, etc. (I gave the letter to the office-boy, who (and he) posted it; I have just received your reply, which (and it) I must confess is rather disappointing.)

4. "He will try to treat it exhaustively and not return to the office, until he has his story complete." It is customary to use a comma between an adverb-clause and a main clause only when the adverb-clause *precedes* the main statement. Here the adverb-clause follows.

5. "The candidate, having concluded his speech, his chief supporter moved a vote of thanks." Omit the first comma. This sentence contains an absolute phrase (see ABSOLUTE PHRASES) which should be treated as a whole and separated from the rest by a comma.

It will be observed that in none of the places where a comma has been wrongly inserted in the above examples would a pause be made in the reading.

COMMENT.

The accent is on the first syllable in the noun and the verb.

COMMUNAL.

The accent may be on either the first or the second syllable. It is, perhaps, more common to accent the first.

COMMUNE.

The noun (meaning *territorial division*, etc.), has the accent on the first syllable. In the case of the verb (meaning *converse*) the accent is allowed on either syllable. It is probably more common to hear the first syllable stressed.

COMPARATIVE DEGREE.

(See DEGREES OF COMPARISON.)

COMPARE TO, WITH.

Should we use *to* or *with* after *compare*? Sometimes either preposition is correct. But if by *compare* we mean *suggest a likeness*, we should use *to*; e.g. Portia compared mercy *to* the gentle rain from heaven. If, on the other hand, our comparison is an extended process setting forth the details of similarity, we must use *with*; e.g. The English chemist compared his results *with* those of the Frenchman, who had been working under similar conditions.

A similar distinction exists between *comparable to* and *comparable with*.

COMPARISONS FAULTILY EXPRESSED.

The statement of a comparison often causes difficulty. The important point to remember is that only things of the same kind can be compared. Sometimes essential words are omitted (especially after *than*), so that unlike things appear to be compared. The fault is clear in such cases as: "The value of the coal exported is greater than any other product." (Insert *that of* before *any*; otherwise value is compared with product.) "The lecturer said that the Public School system was anomalous as contrasted with France and Germany, where rich and poor were educated side by side." (A system is contrasted with two countries.)

The following sentences contain similar but less obvious errors—

> As regards current trading, the increase of sales, both in the furniture and timber sections of the business, as compared with the corresponding period of the previous year, is particularly gratifying to your directors.

(Increase of sales is compared with a period. Say: the increased sales . . . as compared with those of . . . are particularly . . .)

> I was recently paying a visit to two countries where tobacco is ridiculously cheap as compared with its enormous prices here.

(Write: where the prices of tobacco are ridiculously low as compared with those in England.)

COMPATIBLE.

Followed by *with*. His extreme Labour views are hardly *compatible with* his position as shareholder in a rubber company.

COMPLEMENT.

(See PREDICATIVE WORDS.)

COMPLEX SENTENCE.

A complex sentence consists of *one* main clause together with one or more subordinate clauses. (See CLAUSES.) E.g.—

> When the manager returns, I will ask him whether the books which you ordered have arrived from the publishers.

This includes a main clause (I will ask him), an adverb-clause (when the manager returns), a noun-clause (whether the books have arrived from the publishers), and an adjective-clause (which you ordered).

COMPOUND SENTENCE.

(See DOUBLE SENTENCE, MULTIPLE SENTENCE.)

COMPRISE.

Comprised should not be followed by *of*. We may say that a house *consists of* three reception rooms, five bedrooms, etc., or that it *comprises* those rooms, but not that it *is comprised of* the rooms. Other examples of correct use—

> The new committee *comprised* men of widely differing views.
>
> The properties *comprised in* the sale are three cottages, a larger residence, and a shop.

The wrong use of *comprised* is very common.

CONCUR.

We concur *with* a person *in* an opinion. This word is most commonly used in a construction containing *in*. The other directors did not *concur in* his proposal to extend the works. Mr. Jones and Mr. Robinson *concurred in* opposing the policy of the board.

CONFUSION OF EXPRESSION.

Errors frequently arise through the confusion of two constructions in one sentence. The writer starts with one mode of expression in his mind, and when he is half way through the sentence he changes to another mode. A few typical examples will make clear what is meant—

1. "The committee suggests the holding of a competition for the best design, and that the judging should take place before the end of the year." The verb *suggests* has two objects; one is a noun (*the holding*), and the other is a clause beginning with *that*. Both objects should have the same form. Re-write thus: The committee suggests *that a competition should be held* . . . and that . . .

2. "Hardly (or Scarcely) had the manager left the shop than the goods arrived." *Than* must be used after a comparative. We may say: *No sooner* had the manager left the shop *than* . . .; but if we begin with *hardly* or *scarcely* we must follow with: *when* the goods arrived.

3. "With the possible exception of Mexico, the rapidity of development of oil production in Venezuela has not been equalled in the history of the industry." Here the two constructions that have been mixed are: (*a*) With the possible exception of Mexico, *no other country* has equalled Venezuela . . . (*b*) The rapidity . . . in Venezuela has not been equalled anywhere *except possibly in Mexico* . . .

4. "All these works are equipped with modern plant and situated in strategical centres, placing the company not only in a position second to none *for dealing* with obsolete tonnage and other dismantling operations to the best advantage, but *to command* supplies of materials in all districts." *For commanding* is needed as a parallel to *for dealing*. Change the position of *not only*, and

write : in a position second to none *not only for dealing* with obsolete tonnage . . . *but for commanding* supplies . . .

5. " Our advertising agents are confident that it will then be with Triplex as it has been with pneumatic tyres, electric lighting, self-starters, four-wheel brakes, and other items *that* the public now expect to be included in the equipment of any motor-car, *but which* for a long time there was an extra charge." Two parallel clauses containing *which* should be used ; and *for* is needed before the second *which* to complete the sense. Write : items *which* the public . . ., but *for which* for a long time . . .

6. " The real *reason why* British cars are not designed to meet general conditions in the export markets of the world is not *in the hope* that roads will eventually accommodate themselves to British cars, but *because* our manufacturers are hampered by the present method of taxation." There is a complete muddle here. Having started with *the reason why*, the writer changes to another form of expression in *in the hope that*, and later reverts to the first form with *because*, but thus introduces the error of redundancy. (See REASON WHY . . . BECAUSE.) Write : The real reason why . . . is not *that* our manufacturers hope . . . but *that* they are hampered . . . Or better—British cars are designed without regard to the general conditions in the export markets of the world *not because* it is hoped that . . . *but because* our manufacturers . . .

CONFUSION OF PARTICIPLE AND GERUND.

The error here dealt with is so common amongst writers of all kinds to-day that it seems almost hopeless to protest against it, yet it is most offensive to anyone with a feeling for grammar. In order to appreciate properly the point at issue it is necessary to understand the subject-matter of the articles on GERUND and

PARTICIPLES, though the simplest cases of the mistake can be made clear at once. A moment's consideration will show that "I dislike *him* coming late," should be changed to "I dislike *his* coming late." The first sentence says that I dislike him; but I may like him personally very much. What I dislike is his *action* of coming late. Using grammatical terms, we may say that in the first case *him* is the object of the verb, and it is qualified by the participle *coming*; the object required, however, is *coming*, which should therefore be a gerund preceded by the possessive *his*. Similarly, in "I object to him going early," *him* should be *his* because the preposition *to* ought to govern *going*. It will be seen from the following examples, however, that the error cannot be so easily corrected when the verb-form ending in *-ing* is not preceded by a pronoun.

1. "Protests were made in the House of Lords against so many bills *being introduced* late in the session." The protests were made not against the bills, but against their late introduction. But it would be too awkward to write: against the bills' being introduced; we must therefore say: against the introduction of . . .

2. "Mankind died of curable diseases every day, but that did not impair their faith in those diseases *being* curable if they were treated in proper time." Write: faith that those diseases were curable.

3. "During the year economies have been effected, particularly in consequence of the more efficient plant at Ferrybridge *having been* brought into operation." Write: particularly because the more efficient plant . . . has been brought . . .

CONJUNCTION.

A conjunction is a word used to connect words or groups of words: He *and* I will go. Give it to John *or* me. He came, *but* I was not in. Many conjunctions are

used to introduce subordinate clauses (see CLAUSES), e.g. *as, after, since, though, if, unless, because, when, how.*

CONNIVE.

Followed by *at*. The warder *connived at* the prisoner's escape.

CONSEQUENT.

Followed by *upon*. There was severe trade depression *consequent upon* a number of serious strikes.

CONSIDER—REGARD.

Regard should be followed by *as*, but *consider* should not. The correct forms are : I *regard* him *as* unfitted for the post ; I *consider* him unfitted for the post.

CONSIST OF, CONSIST IN.

Consist has different meanings according to whether it is followed by *of* or *in*. To *consist of* is to be composed of ; e.g. The property consists of a large house and seven acres of grounds. The meaning of *consist in* is exemplified in the following sentences. The chief merit of the novel *consists in* the skilful delineation of character. The difficulty of his task *consists in* securing harmony between the management and the workpeople.

CONSOLS.

The accent is on the second syllable.

CONSUMMATE.

The adjective has the accent on the second syllable. The verb is pronounced : con'summāt.

CONTEMPTIBLE—CONTEMPTUOUS.

Contemptible means *worthy of contempt ; contemptuous* means *showing contempt*. Such a *contemptible* action is

beneath my notice. His pride and egoism led him to speak of his opponents in most *contemptuous* terms. He showed himself *contemptuous of* public opinion.

CONTINGENT.

Followed by *on* (*upon*). His promotion was made *contingent on* his securing sufficient new business to justify the creation of an additional department.

CONTINUAL—CONTINUOUS.

The distinction between these two words is rather subtle. Something is *continual* when it is always going on and is not thought of as coming to an end. *Continual* can be replaced by *constant, perpetual.* He suffered from *continual* thirst. There were *continual* delays. There is a *continual* coming and going of visitors.

When we use *continuous* we have in mind the beginning and the end; *constant* and *perpetual* would not be appropriate. The records of the period are not *continuous* as documents for the years 1610–1612 are missing. The canals form a *continuous* waterway for 300 miles. The new aeroplane is capable of three days' *continuous* flight.

CONTRARY.

The accent is on the first syllable. The word is pronounced: contrār'y, however, when it is used colloquially to mean perverse, self-willed.

CONTROVERSY.

The first syllable should be accented.

CONVERSANT.

The accent is on the first syllable. The word should be followed by *with.* I made no remarks as I was not *conversant with* the subject.

CORRECT ENGLISH: HOW IS THE STANDARD OF CORRECTNESS FIXED?

It will not be out of place in a book which seeks to discriminate between what is correct and what is incorrect in the use of English to give some explanation of how we arrive at our standard of judgment in these matters. This is the more necessary since there are few subjects on which so much nonsense is talked and written. As we all use the English language and most educated people have some knowledge of the tongues from which much of our vocabulary is derived, it is, perhaps, not surprising that everybody should think himself competent to give his views about a point in pronunciation or usage. Yet the letters which fill the correspondence columns of the newspapers as soon as a hare of this sort is started show that the writers usually have hardly begun to understand the problems involved.

How is a Disputed Point in Pronunciation to be Settled? A clergyman recently wrote to *The Times* protesting against the B.B.C.'s ruling that its announcers should pronounce *electricity* with the first *e* short (ĕlectricity); he thought it unquestionable that the initial *e* should be long because the first syllable of the original Greek word is long. Now, the fact of the matter is, as very little consideration will show, that the length of vowels in Latin or Greek is of no value in determining the pronunciation of the derived word. Thus, if we followed the ancient tongues, we should have to discard present usage and say ālien, dēcent, īdĕa, mīlitary, ōdour, sōlitary, varīety, to mention only a few cases.

Another illustration of the pitfalls in the path of those who discuss the canons of English speech was provided not long ago by a leader-writer in *The Times* who called in question Mr. Fowler's recommendation (in *Modern English Usage*) that the *th* should not be pronounced in the plural *clothes*. Most people, no doubt, consider it

vulgar to say *close*. Mr. Kenneth Sisam, however, took the opportunity of pointing out that the pronunciation without *th* is at least five centuries old. Moreover, *close* was the ordinary pronunciation of the educated Englishman of the eighteenth century : the chief poets rhymed the word with *foes*, *woes*, etc., and Dr. Johnson went out of his way in his Dictionary to say " pronounced *clo's*." The modern pronunciation is a reconstruction from the spelling.

If even the man of literary training is incompetent to settle many of the disputed points, who is to decide the matter ? The ultimate ruling comes from the usage found amongst the majority of educated speakers. If we want to know how to pronounce *pejorative*, the question to ask is not, " How ought it to be pronounced according to its derivation ? " but, " How do most educated people pronounce it ? " It may seem that we are applying a vague and unscientific standard ; but there is, in fact, no other standard.

It has been suggested that we should accept as final all the rulings given in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. This invaluable and monumental work is no doubt as near as we are likely to get to a final authority, but it must be remembered that the first volumes were published a generation ago and pronunciation of some words has changed since then. It is arguable that the *Oxford Dictionary* should be made to set the standard and thus be erected into a final authority, but it cannot be maintained that the Dictionary is at present an absolutely faithful record of present-day speech. To obtain such a record it would be necessary for a body of men to carry out a wide investigation into the speech of numbers of people in various grades of society throughout the English-speaking community.

What is " Good " Spoken English ? The problem of finding a standard applies not only to individual words

but to the spoken language as a whole. We say that a certain person's speech or " accent " is " good." What do we mean by " good," and who decides whether it is " good " or not ? As we look into the matter we become aware that there are many varieties of spoken English. We at once think of the dialects to be found in different parts of the country ; and then it will occur to us that even in one town there is no uniformity of speech. In London, for instance, the parson or the barrister speaks differently from the average small shop-keeper, and again, the small shop-keeper speaks differently from the coster ; in other words, speech varies according to social class.

Standard Spoken English. In spite of the differences just noted we feel that there must be some form of speech that we could call " Standard English "—the English that we should teach a foreigner. If we are prepared to allow for individual peculiarities and to use the term in a wide sense, there is indeed something that we can describe as Standard English. There is a form of speech which is common to almost all educated people, whether they come from London, Exeter, York, or Worcester. It marks them as a class, and people who wish to enter that class find it necessary to imitate this mode of speech as nearly as possible. We all recognize Standard English when we hear it, but we should find it hard to define it with any precision. An authority on the subject has described it as " that form of carefully spoken English which will appear to the majority of educated people as entirely free from unusual features." And this definition is deliberately loose.

It must be emphasized that Standard English is essentially a class-dialect. From an historical point of view it has no more claim to be called " right " than has the dialect of Manchester or Somerset. It was itself originally the dialect of London and the Court. It has reached its supremacy over other forms of the language

through the social prestige attaching to it. Hence, when we state that this, that, or the other is "right" in speech, all that we mean is that most people of a certain class say it thus.

Language is Always Changing. We must not be led by the term "Standard English" to suppose that there is one form of the language that has remained, and will remain fixed and immutable. Language is always in the process of change, and the effects of the process are observable even in a generation. A striking example is to be seen in the words like *cloth, cross, off, froth.* Two pronunciations exist, one with the vowel sound heard in *on* and one with the vowel sound in *broad.* Within the writer's memory the first of these was fashionable; now the second has come into vogue. Certain changes are also occurring in the diphthongal sounds, so that *are, ire, our,* are almost identical in the speech of many people.

Literary English. The written language is not, of course, the same as the spoken language. It is an artificial form of expression created by the great writers, and it is thus the product of a long tradition. Many forms (e.g. the Subjunctive Mood) are preserved in the literary language though they are almost or entirely disused in talk. How do we arrive at what is good literary English? Again the standard of correctness is settled by a majority vote: but this time the voters are the writers of recognized ability. On many points the writers of the past may be consulted, but on others those of the present age are alone entitled to a hearing; for in the literary as in the spoken language change is always in progress. Words alter their use and idioms vary: thus—to take one or two examples at random—Addison wrote "When we *were* arrived," where we should write "When we *had* arrived"; Macaulay often used *frugal* to mean *sparing in the use of money,*

whereas to-day the word is generally restricted in its application to meals or diet ; and the older writers used the phrase " the same *with* " instead of the modern " the same *as*." Again, the slang expressions of one generation may win a recognized place in the literary language of the next generation. A few years ago " *to turn down* a scheme " would have been regarded as slang ; but it has such good authority nowadays that it would be pedantic to object to it.

Let us apply these considerations to a particular problem. Should we write *different from* or *different to* ? It is first to be noted that *different to* is firmly established in the colloquial language. But may we admit it in writing ? On theoretical grounds it is argued that *from* is the correct preposition, but the soundness of the argument has been questioned. Turning to the practice of the great writers of the past, we find that *different to* is fairly frequently used, though *different from* is normal. What of the present day writers ? No doubt the use of *to* is becoming increasingly common, but the weight of authority is still on the side of *from*. Therefore, those, at least, who are conservatives in these matters will prefer *from*.

CORRELATIVE CONJUNCTIONS.

Correlative Conjunctions are connecting words used in pairs ; e.g. *both . . . and, either . . . or, not only . . . but also, rather . . . than*. On the correct placing of these words see RULE OF PROXIMITY.

COUNCIL—COUNSEL.

Council is always a noun, and means *an assembly ; a deliberative body*. *Counsel* as a noun means *advice* (e.g. to give good *counsel*). It is also used in the idiom *to keep one's own counsel*, and in the legal term *King's Counsel*. *Counsel* may also be a verb (to give advice).

CREDIBLE—CREDULOUS—CREDITABLE.

Credible means *worthy of belief*. It is generally applied to statements; e.g. He gave so many convincing details that his story was perfectly *credible*. It may also be applied to persons; e.g. Many *credible* witnesses have affirmed this. (Cp. the use of the adverb: I am *credibly* informed that . . .) *Credulous* is applied to persons, and means *too ready to believe*; e.g. There are still to be found some *credulous* people who believe in witches. *Creditable* is sometimes confused with *credible*. It really means *bringing credit or honour*; e.g. His achievement in finding the criminal was most *creditable*.

CRITERION.

This word is often used loosely by people who have only a vague idea of its signification. A criterion is a principle or standard by which we can judge something. Americans are said to regard the amount of money a man makes as a *criterion* of his ability. A man's speech and manners are usually taken as a *criterion* of his social position.

The plural is *criteria*.

CULMINATE.

Followed by *in*. For several years he suffered a series of misfortunes which *culminated in* the death of his wife.

DASH.

The mark of punctuation called the Dash (—) is frequently over-worked by careless writers. It is made to do duty for almost any other stop. The dash has certain definite uses, and it should be reserved for these—

1. It is used before and after a parenthetical remark—
We are not at the moment proposing to pay more

than 8 per cent, but later on—I cannot say when—we shall no doubt issue additional amounts of Debenture stock.

2. It marks a sudden change of thought—

I now come to the latest plan proposed—but perhaps I had better leave this until another occasion.

3. It is inserted before a repeated word in sentences like the following—

Before we can proceed with the scheme we have many preparations to make—preparations which I think will occupy several months, and will fully tax our resources.

4. It may be used with, or instead of a comma, in order to give special emphasis to a remark—

The Prime Minister gave a pledge at the last election that this evil would be remedied,—but we all know the value of election pledges.

DATIVE CASE.

(See CASE.)

DECOROUS—DECORUM.

Decorum has the accent on the second syllable.

According to the dictionaries *decorous* should also have the accent on the second syllable: but the pronunciation in which the first syllable is stressed is very common.

DEFECTIVE—DEFICIENT.

While both these words have the synonym "incomplete," *defective* tends to be definitely restricted to uses connected with *defect*, so that it means *faulty*. *Deficient*, however, is connected with *deficit*, and means *insufficient in quantity, etc.* Examples of the two words—

The aeroplane had to descend through a *defective*

engine. His drawing is *defective.* The article is cheaper because it is slightly *defective.*

Through the bad weather the harvest is sadly *deficient.* A home for the mentally *deficient.* He is by no means *deficient in* courage.

Sometimes either word is appropriate; e.g. As a statesman he was *defective* (*deficient*), for he lacked imagination.

DEFICIT.

This word should not be accented on the second syllable. The pronunciation should be either: dĕ'fĭsĭt or dē'fĭsĭt.

DEFINITE—DEFINITIVE.

These two adjectives are not synonymous: the one is not merely a longer form of the other, as some writers seem to think. *Definite* means *clear, precise, not vague. Definitive* (pronounced: defin'ĭtive) means *conclusive, unconditional, final.* A definite answer or treaty is one that is stated in precise terms; it is definitive if it finally settles the matter at issue. A definitive edition of a novelist's works is one which gives them in their best and final form, and which is not likely, therefore, to be superseded. If a firm makes a definitive offer, that offer must be accepted or rejected without haggling.

DEGREES OF COMPARISON.

Many adjectives have three forms: (1) the Positive (the simple form), e.g. *rich, beautiful*; (2) the Comparative, used when two persons or things are compared, e.g. *richer, more beautiful*; (3) the Superlative, used when more than two persons or things are compared, e.g. *richest, most beautiful.*

Many adverbs are similarly compared: *fast, faster, fastest; quickly, more quickly, most quickly.*

DEMUR.

Followed by *to*. He maintains that the profits have shown a continuous increase during the past five years ; but I *demur to* the truth of this statement. He was inclined to *demur to* the demand that he should take the responsibility.

DEPRECATE—DEPRECIATE.

Deprecate means *plead against* ; *express disapproval of*. He assumed a humble attitude as if to *deprecate* her anger. No matter what our situation is, hasty action is to be *deprecated.*

Depreciate means *diminish in value* ; *lower the price of* ; *disparage*. The shares are *depreciating* daily. He is so envious of others that he always *depreciates* the work of his rivals.

DEROGATE.

Followed by *from*. A few minor faults and inaccuracies can never *derogate from* the solid merits of this writer's work.

DEROGATORY.

Followed by *to*. The manager considered it *derogatory to* his position to accept the terms of the trade union leaders.

DESULTORY.

Pronounced : dĕss'ultory.

DETER.

Followed by *from* and either a noun or a verb-form ending in *-ing*. One of the aims of imprisonment is to *deter* men *from* crime. He said that he hoped he would never be *deterred from* doing his duty by threats.

DETERIORATE.

Notice that this word has five syllables. A common mistake in speaking and writing is to leave out the fourth syllable.

Deteriorate means *to grow worse*; e.g. Many savage tribes have *deteriorated* through contact with white civilization. The dictionaries give also the meaning *to make worse.* Although occasional examples of this transitive use are to be found in good authors, it is best avoided. In present-day English we do not normally say, "Damp will *deteriorate* these goods," but, "Damp will *cause* these goods *to deteriorate.*"

DEVOLVE.

Followed by *on* (*upon*). The task of trying to arrange a compromise *devolved on* the managing director.

DIFFER—VARY.

Differ should be followed by *from* when a preposition is needed. Your opinion *differs from* mine. I *differ from* you in opinion. We are so unlike that we shall always *differ.* But this verb should not be followed by *according to.* It is wrong to say: One's view of life tends to *differ according to* one's state of health. Here *vary* should be substituted.

DIFFERENT.

The textbooks have always told us that we should write *different from,* although *different to* is very common colloquially. (The reason given is that one thing differs *from,* not *to,* another.) It is true that *different to* has been used frequently by standard authors, and no less an authority than Mr. H. W. Fowler has recently defended it. But humble writers who are not animated by reforming zeal may be counselled to keep to *different from.* They will thus escape the criticism of the many

who have heard that this is the correct expression, and who are prepared to be supercilious towards poor creatures who know no better than to say *different to*.

Whatever defence there may be for using *to* with *different*, there can be no excuse for using *than*. The following exemplifies a common error—Several volumes have been published on this subject, but they were intended for *different* purposes *than* the present book. (Write: for *different* purposes *from* that of . . .; or for *other* purposes *than* that of . . .)

DIPHTHERIA—DIPHTHONG.

Pronounced: difthēr'ia; dif'thong.

The pronunciations: dipthēr'ia; dip'thong, are vulgarisms.

DISSENT.

Followed by *from*. I *dissent from* you on this matter.

DOUBLE SENTENCE, MULTIPLE SENTENCE.

A Double Sentence contains two clauses of equal importance, i.e. clauses which will make sense taken separately. A Multiple Sentence contains more than two such clauses. (See CLAUSES.) Examples—

I opened the door, and after some hesitation I entered the shop. (Double.)

I opened the door, and after some hesitation I entered the shop, but there was no one inside. (Multiple.)

Sentences of this type used to be called "Compound."

Double and Multiple Sentences may contain subordinate clauses dependent on the main clauses.

DUE TO.

One of the latest fashions in writing is to misuse *due to* for *owing to*, as in the following sentence: "The

houses were almost uninhabitable, *due to* the bad materials employed." *Due* is really an adjective (The rent is *due*; You should have your *due* proportion; The accident was *due* to carelessness), and it should therefore qualify a noun, but it has no such grammatical relationship in this sentence. In place of *due to* we need the compound preposition *owing to* to govern *materials*. Other examples: The Post Office has for some time been financially successful, undoubtedly *due to* the extortionate charges inflicted on telephone subscribers. (The Post Office is not due; and there is no other word to which *due* can refer. Write: *owing to*.) *Due to* the Central Electricity Board's activities, and to the developments undertaken by the more progressive municipalities and power companies to meet the growing demand, the most highly developed plant is now being called for. (*Owing to*.)

EACH.

Each, whether used as an adjective or a pronoun, refers to persons or things taken singly. Any other words that relate to it must therefore be singular. The following are incorrect: Each person who considers the matter must make up *their* own mind. (Write: his own mind.) Each of them *have* brought *their* own contribution to the fund. (Write: has brought his own.)

EACH OTHER—ONE ANOTHER.

It is frequently said that *each other* should be used in reference to two, and *one another* in reference to more than two. Many writers, however, do not observe this distinction, and it seems hardly worth while to insist on it.

EFFECT.

(See AFFECT—EFFECT.)

EFFECTIVE—EFFECTUAL—EFFICACIOUS—EFFICIENT.

All these words mean *producing an effect*, but they are not completely synonymous although some of them have certain uses in common. *Efficacious* is distinguished from the rest nowadays by being applied almost exclusively to medicines and remedies. The following notes on the remaining three may serve to bring out their chief divergencies in meaning—

1. *Effective* often means *having a striking effect*: He made an *effective* speech. He is an *effective* speaker. We talk of the *effective* membership (actual membership) of a trade union; and we say that an Act of Parliament becomes *effective* on a certain date.

2. To take *effectual* steps is to take steps which answer the purpose. A remedy may be *effectual* (or *efficacious*).

3. *Efficient* is often applied to persons, and means *capable, competent* (An *efficient* workman). It is similarly used with reference to things which successfully achieve the desired purpose: The business succeeded because of the *efficient* management, or its *efficient* methods.

EITHER.

Either should be used in reference to two only: Has *either* of the two men arrived? But: Has *any one* of the four arrived?

Either is singular and should not be followed by a plural verb. Incorrect: Do you think that either of the books *are* useful? (*is*).

EITHER . . . OR.

(See RULES OF AGREEMENT, ERRORS IN AGREEMENT, RULE OF PROXIMITY.)

EMPHASIS.

Writers of business letters, reports, and memoranda, and all who wish to cultivate a forceful style should study

the various devices that may be employed to give added point to sentences. It is obvious that an idea may generally be stated—and quite correctly and clearly stated—in more than one way. But if just the necessary emphasis is to be given to a particular aspect of the idea only one form of statement is the right one.

1. The most important principle to be grasped concerns the *arrangement of words*. There is a certain natural order of words to which any sentence will conform unless there is a special reason to the contrary. Thus, we should normally say "The fire spread with incredible rapidity through room after room." But if we wished to give a different emphasis, we might say either, "With incredible rapidity the fire spread through room after room," or "Through room after room the fire spread with incredible rapidity." By taking a word or group of words out of its normal place we call the reader's attention to it, and so give it special emphasis. Some other examples may be given—

Great as was his reputation, it did not outlive this reverse.

Feeble and ineffectual were his efforts to improve the conditions.

The only man who proved to be at all useful in this emergency was *Jones*.

To her grandchildren she could be, when occasion demanded it, *severe*.

2. An idea may often be given striking expression by embodying it in a sentence built up according to a *clearly marked pattern*. The sentence may contain a series of parallel phrases or clauses formed alike; e.g.—

The effect of monopoly generally is to make articles scarce, to make them dear, and to make them bad.

Just as the absurd acts which prohibited the sale of game were virtually repealed by the poacher, just

as many absurd revenue acts have been virtually repealed by the smuggler, so will this law be virtually repealed by piratical booksellers.

Or the sentence may exhibit a balanced structure—

He is but a short-sighted friend of the common people who is eager to bestow on them a franchise which would make them all-powerful, and yet would withhold from them that instruction without which their power must be a curse to themselves and to the State.

(An outline of this sentence makes clear the balance of the parts: He is short-sighted . . . *who* is eager to *bestow* something *which* . . ., and (*who*) yet would *withhold* something *without which* . . .)

When parts of a sentence are balanced in such a way as to produce a striking contrast of words and ideas we obtain what is known as *antithesis*. This is a valuable means of securing emphasis; e.g.—

There may be a change of *men*; but there will be no change of *measures*.

You will find that, in attempting to impose unreasonable restraints on reprinting the works of the *dead*, you have, to a great extent, annulled those restraints which now prevent men from pillaging and defrauding the *living*.

3. The judicious *use of correlative conjunctions* (see CORRELATIVE CONJUNCTIONS) is another helpful device. Thus, the sentence "He was an actor and a dramatist" can be made more effective by altering it to: "*Not only* was he an actor, *but also* a dramatist." Other examples—

I long ago espoused the cause of religious liberty, *not* because the cause was popular, *but* because it was just.

My purpose is *rather* to clear away difficulties *than* to initiate a new scheme.

4. In the hands of a skilful writer *repetition* can be made an excellent means of securing emphasis. Of course, the novice admits the same word or phrase two or three times in a sentence through sheer inadvertence; and the result is disastrous. But deliberate repetition for emphasis is a legitimate weapon of the writer no less than of the orator. The following passage (by Macaulay) illustrates its use—

> English law transplanted to that country has all the *vices from which we suffer* here; it has them in a far higher degree; and it has other *vices*, compared with which the worst *vices from which we suffer* are trifles. *Dilatory* here, *it is far more dilatory* in a land where the help of an interpreter is needed *by every* judge and *by every* advocate. *Costly* here, *it is far more costly* in a land where the legal practitioners must be imported from an immense distance.

ENVELOPE.

This word has been so long established in our language that the perpetuation of a pseudo-French pronunciation (ŏn'velōp) is pointless. The pronunciation ĕn'velōp has dictionary authority, and should be generally adopted.

EQUALLY AS WELL AS.

This redundant phrase is frequently met with in statements like—

> I can do the work *equally as well as* he can.

We may correctly say either (*a*) I can do the work *equally* well, or (*b*) I can do the work *as well as* he can. The phrase *equally as well as* states the same idea twice.

ERRORS IN AGREEMENT.

See RULES OF AGREEMENT for the rules which apply to the errors noted below. In the sections which

follow, a number of typical examples of mistakes are given, together with explanations of the corrections necessary.

1. Agreement of Subject and Verb.

(*a*) A chain of huge lakes extending for hundreds of miles *form* the boundary between Canada and the United States.

Write : *forms*. The subject is *chain*, and the verb has been attracted to the wrong number because of the intervening plural words *lakes* and *miles*.

Sir Mark would also like to see added to the balance sheet a series of notes explaining the basis on which the value of certain assets *have* been ascertained.

Write : *has*. The subject is *value*.

(*b*) The general with the whole of his staff *were* present at the function (*was*).

He says that he as well as his secretary *are* thinking of resigning (*is*).

When a singular subject (*general*, *he*) is followed by a phrase beginning with *with* or *as well as*, the verb must be singular.

(*c*) Beyond the pasture lands of the plain, *rise* to the west a wall of mountains reaching 6,000 feet in height (*rises*).

There *was* in that period a prolonged agitation for reform and even an attempted revolution (*were*).

In these cases the fault has arisen because the subject follows the verb, and has not been recognized as such. In the first example, *wall* (not *mountains*) is the subject, and is singular. The second sentence has a double subject, viz., *agitation* and *revolution*. A plural verb is therefore required.

(*d*) Neither he nor his secretary *were* in the office (*was*).

Two singular subjects connected by *either . . . or, neither . . . nor* require a singular verb.

(*e*) I do not think that either he or you *is* fitted for the post (*are*).

He requires *is*, but *you* requires *are*. When two subjects of different person are connected by *either . . . or, neither . . . nor*, the verb should agree with the nearer.

(*f*) COLLECTIVE NOUNS. A collective noun is the name of a group of persons or things. Grammatically, a word like *committee* is singular (for we can have the plural *committees*); but we frequently find that it is followed by a plural verb and plural pronouns and adjectives referring to it.

The committee *were* divided on the matter, and *they were* long in coming to *their* decision.

This use is to be justified on the ground that we are here regarding the committee, not as a single body, but as a number of separate individuals having different views. While we should use the singular in—

The whole staff *is* offended by the chief's action,

we should use the plural in—

All the staff *have* signed a letter of protest.

Care must be taken, however, not to treat a collective noun as singular in one part of the sentence and as plural in another.

The following are examples of a fairly common error—

The Cambridge crew *has* made remarkable progress, and it is possible to say that *they are* at this stage much better than any Oxford crew of recent years.

(Change either *has* to *have*, or *they are* to *it is*.)

Now that the Central Electricity Board *is* at work, the demand for heavy plant is bound to improve, but time must be allowed for this body to launch *their* schemes and bring them into being.

(*g*) *Each, Every, Everybody, Anybody, Either, Neither, No-one, Nobody, None,* are frequently followed by plural words when singulars are required. See the articles on each of these words.

2. **Adjective and Noun.** A very common error is seen in the expressions " these kind of things," " those sort of people." *These* and *those* are plural, yet they refer to the singular nouns *kind, sort.* We should say " things of this kind," " people of that sort."

3. **Relative Pronoun and Antecedent.** Sometimes the verb in a relative clause is put into the wrong number because the true antecedent of the relative pronoun is not recognized.

This is one of the most exciting plays that *has* been produced this season (*have*).

The antecedent of *that* is *plays*, not *one*. *That* is therefore plural and its verb should be plural.

ERRORS IN CASE.

See CASE for the rules which apply. English nouns do not show any difference of form between the nominative and the accusative, but the pronouns do, and it is in their use that mistakes are often made.

(1) *He* who makes most progress, the firm will certainly promote (*him*).

Who did you meet at the concert ? (*whom*).

He and *who* are respectively the objects of *will promote* and *meet*, and they must be in the accusative case. The forms *he* and *who* are used only for the nominative case.

(2) Between you and *I*, there is going to be trouble (*me*).

These rules apply equally to you and *he* (*him*).

In both cases the pronouns are governed by prepositions (*between, to*), and should be in the accusative.

One or two words which are really conjunctions are sometimes treated as though they were prepositions, and are wrongly followed by an accusative. (See As and Than. See also But.)

(3) I must introduce you to the new manager *whom* we all think is going to be a great success (*who*).

The relative pronoun *whom* is the subject of *is going*, and should therefore be in the nominative. It has been erroneously regarded as the object of *think*. The words *we all think* are really in parenthesis.

(4) If you wish to know the culprit, it is *me* (*I*).
If I were *him*, I should go (*he*).

Me and *him* are predicative pronouns, not objects. They should therefore be in the nominative, and not the accusative, case. (See Predicative Words.)

EVENTUALITY—EVENTUATE.

These words are beloved of journalists—

In view of the likelihood of a general strike, the Government must be ready for any *eventuality*.

A scheme for new roads costing several hundred thousand pounds was proposed, but it did not *eventuate*.

There seems small need to employ these pretentious words. The ordinary English for *eventuality* is *event, emergency*, etc.; and for *eventuate* a simpler equivalent can always be found to suit the context.

EVERY.

When *every* is used before a noun, it must not be followed by plurals (*they, their*, etc.). An example of the error—

The Daily Telegraph has, I believe, contrived that

the play should continue, for, although *every* paper gave it an excellent review, *they* did not make one realize how wonderful and how important it is.

(*Every paper* implies that single papers are taken separately, and we ought to have a singular pronoun in place of *they*. But the natural correction here would be to say *all the papers*, and retain *they*.)

EVERYBODY—EVERYONE.

These pronouns are grammatically singular; hence pronouns and possessives that refer to them should be singular. Frequently in colloquial language, however, and sometimes even in serious writing, they are treated as plural. Examples of this use may be considered in two categories—

(1) *Everybody* (*everyone*) must make up *their* own mind in the matter.

Here there is no justification for the plural *their*. We are definitely taking people separately. *His* (serving as both masculine and feminine) should be used.

(2) When the fire alarm was given, *everyone* lost *their* heads.

Here we are thinking rather of all the people at once than of each person singly. Thus the plural *idea* is so strong that it would seem unnatural to substitute *his* for *their*. In such a case (especially in conversation), there can be no reasonable objection to the plural; but anyone who is fastidious might, in writing, replace *everyone* by *all the people*.

EXCEPT—EXCEPTING.

Except is normally a preposition; *excepting* is also occasionally a preposition. But the two are not

interchangeable. *Excepting* should be used only after a negative.

All the staff, *not excepting* the heads of departments, have agreed to a reduction of salaries (*or*—the heads of departments *not excepted*).

But—

All the staff *except* the heads of departments have agreed . . . (*excepting* would be incorrect).

EXIGENCY—EXIGENT.

Pronounced: ex'ĭjency, ex'ĭjent.

EXTEMPORE.

Pronounced with four syllables: extemp'or-ē.

FACILITATE.

The misuse of this word is to be guarded against. *Facilitate* should not have the name of a person as subject. (*He* was facilitated in his task by . . .) Examples of correct use—

His task of gathering the required information was greatly *facilitated* by the help received from numerous correspondents.

All buildings in the line of fire were removed to *facilitate* the defence of the city.

FACTOR.

Factor has a great vogue nowadays; and it is sadly maltreated in consequence. People use it either as a mere variant of *fact*, or as a beast of burden made to carry all sorts of meanings vaguely connected with the true one. A *factor* is a *circumstance, fact, or influence contributing to a result.* It is essential that the notion of "contributing to a result" should be present if the word

factor is to be properly used. Examples of correct use—

The increase of wages in the industry is the chief *factor* in the rise in prices.

The vigorous sympathy of England was one of the decisive *factors* in the final achievement of Italian unity.

EXAMPLES OF WRONG OR SLIPSHOD USES.

Venezuelan crude oil has become an important *factor* in the operation of Mexican refineries (*important source of supply for*).

Probably the chief *factor* in the autumn situation will be the weight of the new production which will have materialized by that time (*element, fact*).

One of the main *factors* involved when the Public Health (Destruction of Vermin) Bill comes before the House of Lords on Tuesday is that vague and most cherished article of the Englishman's faith—liberty (*facts, considerations*).

So superbly has Compston played throughout the match, that Hagen regards him as a dangerous *factor* not only for the British, but the American, championship (*competitor*).

FEWER.

Fewer should not be used to refer to the word *number.* It is wrong to say—

The *number* of orders received last year was *fewer* than might have been expected.

Substitute *smaller.*

FLACCID.

Pronounced: flak'sid.

FLAGRANT.

Pronounced: flā'grant.

FOREIGN WORDS AND PHRASES: A LIST WITH MEANINGS.

The following list gives the meanings of the commonest foreign terms in general or technical use. (F. = French, L. = Latin, G. = Greek.)

ab initio (L.), from the beginning
ab ovo (L.), from the egg (beginning)
à compte (F.), on account, in part payment
ad finem (L.), to the end
ad infinitum (L.), to infinity
ad libitum (L.), at pleasure
ad nauseam (L.), to the point of disgust
ad valorem (L.), according to value
a fortiori (L.), with stronger reason
alter ego (L.), another self
amour-propre (F.), self-love; vanity
anglice (L.), in English.
a posteriori (L.), (argument) from effect to cause
a priori (L.), (argument) from cause to effect
argent comptant (F.), ready money
arrière pensée (F.), mental reservation; ulterior motive
au fait (F.), well acquainted with
bête noire (F.), bugbear; one's abomination
bêtise (F.), stupid remark or action
bona fide (L.), in good faith; genuine(ly).
bonhomie (F.), good-natured simplicity
bon vivant (F.), gourmand
carte blanche (F.), full discretionary power
casus belli (L.), act justifying war
ceteris paribus (L.), other things being equal
chef d'œuvre (F.), masterpiece
ci-devant (F.), former(ly)
comme il faut (F.), well-bred
compte rendu (F.), account rendered
coup d'état (F.), violent or illegal change in government
coup de grace (F.), finishing stroke
coup de main (F.), sudden violent attack
cui bono? (L.), for whose benefit is it?
cul de sac (F.), blind alley
cum grano salis (L.), with a grain of salt; i.e. with some allowance
de facto (L.), in fact; really
dégagé (F.), easy, unrestrained
de jure (L.), by (legal) right
de novo (L.), anew
de trop (F.), not wanted; in the way
dies non (L.), day on which no legal business is done
double entendre (pseudo-F.), phrase capable of two meanings
entre nous (F.), between ourselves
esprit de corps (F.), regard for the interest or honour of a body to which one belongs
ex officio (L.), by virtue of one's office
ex parte (L.), on (in the interest of) one side only
fait accompli (F.), thing already done
faux pas (F.), false step; mistake

flagrante delicto (L.), in the very act
hic jacet (L.), here lies
hinc illae lacrimae (L.), hence proceed these tears
hoi polloi (G.), the many; the rabble
in esse (L.), in being
in extenso (L.), at full length
in extremis (L.), at the point of death
in forma pauperis (L.), as a poor man
in loco parentis (L.), in the place of a parent
in medias res (L.), into the midst of things
in posse (L.), potentially
in propria persona (L.), in person
in re (L.), in the matter of
in situ (L.), in its original position
in statu quo (L.), in the same place (as formerly)
inter alia (L.), among other things
in toto (L.), completely
ipse dixit (L.), dogmatic statement
ipso facto (L.), by that very fact
jeu d'esprit (F.), witticism
laissez faire (F.), absence of restraint
lapsus linguae (L.), slip of the tongue
Lares et Penates (L.), the home
le beau monde (F.), the fashionable world
lettre de change (F.), bill of exchange
lettre de créance (F.), letter of credit
locum tenens (L.), a deputy
locus standi (L.), recognized position; right to appear in court, etc.
magnum opus (L.), great work
mal-à-propos (F.), ill-timed
mauvaise honte (F.), false modesty
mauvais sujet (F.), a worthless fellow
mise-en-scène (F.), scenery and properties of an acted play
modus operandi (L.), way a person goes to work; way a thing operates
modus vivendi (L.), arrangement between disputants pending the result of a controversy
ne plus ultra (L.), farthest point attainable; culmination
noblesse oblige (F.), rank imposes obligations
nom de plume (pseudo-F.), pen-name
non sequitur (L.), it does not follow
nous verrons (F.), we shall see
obiit (L.), he (she) died
on dit (F.), they say; piece of hearsay
pace (L.), by leave of
pari passu (L.), with equal pace; together
passim (L.), in every part
per (L.), by; by means of
per capita (L.), by the head
per diem, per mensem (L.), (so much) by day, by month
per saltum (L.), by a leap or jump
per se (L.), by or in itself; intrinsically
pis aller (F.), last resource
poste restante (F.), to be left till called for
pot pourri (F.), medley or mixture
prima facie (L.), (based) on first consideration
pro forma (L.), as a matter of form
pro rata (L.), at the same rate; proportionally

pro tempore (L.), for the time being
quid pro quo (L.), one thing for another
raison d'être (F.), reason for a thing's existence
rara avis (L.), rare bird ; prodigy
re (L.), in the matter of
réchauffé (F.), warmed-up dish ; rehash
récherché (F.), rare, exquisite
reductio ad absurdum (L.), reducing a position to an absurdity
rentes (F.), stocks
sang-froid (F.), composure ; coolness
sans frais (F.), without expense
savant (F.), learned man
savoir-faire (F.), tact
savoir-vivre (F.), good-breeding
sine die (L.), without naming a day
sine qua non (L.), an indispensable condition
soi-disant (F.), self-styled ; pretended
stet (L.), let what was deleted stand (in proof-correcting)
sub judice (L.), under judicial consideration
sub rosa (L.), privately
sui generis (L.), not belonging to a class ; unique
tant mieux (F.), so much the better
tant pis (F.), so much the worse
tempus fugit (L.), time flies
tête-à-tête (F.), confidential ; private conversation
tour de force (F.), feat of strength or skill
tout ensemble (F.), thing viewed as a whole ; general effect
ultra vires (L.), beyond legal powers
vade mecum (L.), something (e.g. a handbook) constantly carried about
verbum sat sapienti (abbreviation : *verb. sap.*) (L.), a word is enough to the wise
via media (L.), a middle course
viva voce (L.), oral(ly)
vox populi, vox dei (L.), the voice of the people is the voice of God

FOREIGN WORDS AND PHRASES : UNNECESSARY USE.

A large number of foreign words and phrases (chiefly French) are in more or less common use among English people. Writers would be well advised, however, never to use a foreign expression unless there is a special reason for doing so. Of course, French terms such as *aide-de-camp, chauffeur, chassis, garage, ballet, bouquet, communiqué, hors d'œuvre* are ordinary English for the things named, and no one would suggest that we should abandon them. Again, it is sometimes convenient to employ words like *blasé, naïf* (generally spelt *naïve*), *bizarre, savoir-faire, habitué* because there is no English

equivalent, and they obviate the use of a roundabout phrase. But there are other expressions, e.g. *abattoir* (slaughter-house), *bêtise* (stupid remark or action), *bon mot* (witticism), *entre nous* (between ourselves), for which we have perfectly good English equivalents. People who use such foreign terms in writing generally do so either to satisfy a desire for novelty or to exhibit to others their superior learning.

FORMIDABLE.

The accent is on the first syllable.

FULL STOP.

The full stop (.) is used—

1. At the end of all sentences except questions and exclamations.

2. To mark abbreviations, e.g.—

A. Browning, Esq., M.A. ; i.e. ; T. G. Smith & Co. With regard to abbreviations which include the first and the last letters of the word, the practice varies. Some people write *Mr. Jones, Messrs. Jones & Co., Ltd., Dr. Jones ;* while others omit the full stop and write *Mr Jones ; Messrs Jones & Co., Ltd ; Dr Jones.* The second method seems preferable, for it makes a useful distinction between abbreviations like *Dr* which contain the last letter of the word, and those like *Capt.* which do not contain the final letter. In print, however, it is customary to mark all abbreviations with a full stop.

(See PUNCTUATION : GENERAL HINTS.)

GENITIVE (POSSESSIVE) CASE.

(See CASE.)

GENITIVE PROBLEMS.

The rules for the use of the apostrophe in marking the genitive case are given under APOSTROPHE. Special

points of difficulty arise in connection with proper nouns ending in *s*. Should we write "H. G. Wells's novels" or "H. G. Wells' novels"? Both forms are met with in print, but the form "H. G. Wells's" is tending to become normal. In using the *'s* in such cases, we are not only adhering to the ordinary rule, but we are representing the pronunciation. We say the genitive case of the name with two syllables; we should therefore write the extra syllable. Pronunciation is, in fact, the best guide in the matter. Nobody who tries to record what he says will write "St. James' Square," "The Prince of Wales' tour," "Collins' Odes"; he will give the correct forms—"St. James's Square," "The Prince of Wales's tour," "Collins's Odes."

Further likelihood of confusion occurs when we come to plurals of proper nouns ending in *s*. *Jones* has the plural *Joneses* (We saw the Joneses yesterday). The genitive singular is *Jones's* (Is that Jones's hat?); the genitive plural is *Joneses'* (Is that the Joneses' house?).

It is not easy to bring the test of pronunciation to bear in the case of foreign names ending in *s*. There is a strong temptation to keep to the older practice of writing —"Aristophanes' comedies," "Theocritus' idylls," "Moses' law," since most people jib at pronouncing a genitive ending to such words. But even here the modern tendency (except in verse) is to use the *'s*.

GERUND.

The part of a verb which ends in *-ing* and is used as a noun is called a *gerund*. Examples—(1) *Seeing* is *believing*; (2) I like *driving* a car; (3) On *returning* home I found the letter. In (1) *seeing* is used as a noun, subject of *is*, and *believing* acts as a predicative noun. In (2) *driving* is used as a noun, object of *like*. In (3) *returning* is used as a noun, governed by the preposition *on* (We might say: On my *return*).

Another form of the gerund is made up with the auxiliary verb *to have*; e.g. having returned, having driven, etc. (After *having returned* home, I found the letter.)

(See GERUND MISUSED and CONFUSION OF PARTICIPLE AND GERUND.)

GERUND MISUSED.

(*a*) On *entering* the shop, the till was found to have been broken open.

(*b*) After *passing* the castle-gates, the next building of interest to the visitor is the old posting-inn.

These two sentences exemplify a common mistake. Both contain gerunds governed by prepositions (*on, after*). (See GERUND.) In (*a*), who entered the shop? Obviously some persons. But the subject of the sentence is *till*. Similarly, in (*b*), who passes the castle-gates? The visitor. But the subject of the sentence is *building*. The implied subject of the gerund must not differ from the subject of the complete sentence.

Sentence (*a*) can be corrected thus—On *their* entering . . . , or, When they entered . . .

In (*b*) the gerund should be eliminated—

When the visitor has passed the castle-gates, the next building of interest is the old posting-inn.

In the following example a ludicrous result is produced by the error just explained—

If we had accepted even the engines from the Continent, instead of having a British make of semi-Diesel put in, we could, on those alone, have saved over £1,000; but in addition to *being* patriotic, the British article is, I believe, worth while.

(Apparently the article is patriotic.)

GESTICULATE.

Pronounced : jĕstĭc'ulate.

GESTURE.

Pronounced : jĕst'ure.

GET.

In talk, everybody is constantly using the verb *get*—often as a substitute for another verb. Here are some examples—

Have you got a pen ?
I have got to go at once.
I shall be glad when we get there.
They have recently got married.
The boat sank and he got drowned.
Will he get promoted ?

Some of these expressions are good colloquial English ; some are vulgar. All should be changed in literary English, thus—

Have you a pen ?
I have to go (or, I must go) at once.
I shall be glad when we arrive.
They have recently (been) married.
The boat sank and he was drowned.
Will he be promoted ?

GIBBET.

Pronounced : jibb'et.

HACKNEYED PHRASES.

Many expressions that were once strikingly novel have appeared in print so very often that they have become merely tiresome. When we are told that something is *conspicuous by its absence*, that something else gives us *food for thought*, that a certain innovation has

come to stay, that we are *at the parting of the ways*, or that So-and-so dined *not wisely but too well*, we no longer respond as the writer intended we should. The edge of novelty has worn off. Nothing more clearly marks the feeble writer than a fondness for such hackneyed phrases. He who after writing *slowly* cannot refrain from adding *but surely*, or to *last* must append *but not least*, is either unpractised in the use of the pen, or insensible to the monotony of repetition.

The great purveyor of these stereotyped phrases is the journalist. He, in fact, creates fashions in them. Thus it is to his example that we owe it that nobody nowadays seems to be able to say that a business or a movement has made great progress: we must all use the stale metaphor—"it has made great strides." This expression apparently comes to mind with such mechanical patness that a newspaper can actually give us such a sentence as—"Empire raisins, stimulated by preferential tariffs, *have made enormous strides* during the past few years."

The writer of a recent newspaper article on "The Next 'Best Seller'" managed to get a surprising number of clichés into about thirty lines. He told us that the composition of the next "best seller" *defied analysis*, that there would be in it some theme that *strikes a responsive chord in the hearts* of thousands of readers. He referred to Mr. Hutchinson's "If Winter Comes" as having a success *not likely to be eclipsed* in our generation; this book, he said, came at *the psychological moment*, and it *captured the imagination* of an enormous public.

The journalist no doubt has his excuse for writing this sort of stuff. In the stress of hasty composition he is glad to make use of any ready-made phrase that is to hand. But the writer who aims at excellence in his craft will eschew such makeshifts.

HANGED—HUNG.

When the reference is to hanging a person, we use the form *hanged*—

They *hanged* the prisoner ; the prisoner was *hanged*.

In other cases the form is *hung*—

I *hung* the picture on the wall.

HARDLY . . . THAN.

(See CONFUSION OF EXPRESSION.)

HECTIC.

This word is properly applied to the fever or the flush of the cheeks associated with consumption and similar diseases. It has recently become a fashionable colloquial adjective meaning *exciting, wild, extremely hurried*— " We were moving last week, and we had a *hectic* time for a few days." This misuse of the word often finds its way into print, e.g.—

His *hectic* piece of dramatic declamation about the alleged perils of ethyl had little effect on the audience.

HEINOUS.

Pronounced : hā'nous.

IDEA.

In philosophical and general literary use, *idea* has several shades of meaning, for the explanation of which a good dictionary should be consulted. In colloquial language the word is very loosely used—

The *idea* of such a thing !

Do you think it is a good *idea* (plan) ?

What is the *idea* (principle of working) of this machine ?

My *idea* (plan, object) is to convert the premises into three flats.

In writing, the slipshod substitution of *idea* for *plan, scheme, purpose*, etc., should be avoided.

IDIOM.

An idiom is a mode of expression peculiar to a language. It is natural for an Englishman to say, for example—

> He will *come of age* next week; they *came to blows* over the matter; he *set his face against* the proposal; this *goes against the grain.*

But these phrases would be meaningless to a foreigner if they were literally translated into his language. Idiomatic expressions do not always square with the accepted rules of grammar; but they are not to be rejected on that account. Language is a living thing, and is not always amenable to logical restrictions. Thus, when we say, "This play *acts* well," we are using the verb *acts* in a way which it is difficult to account for grammatically (the expression means—The play goes well when it *is acted*); but we are using a perfectly good idiom. On the other hand, a sentence may be grammatical and yet unidiomatic. "The music sounds *harshly*" is open to no objection on the score of grammar; yet the recognized idiom is, "The music sounds *harsh.*"

The idiomatic use of prepositions is a matter that causes trouble. Certain words are regularly followed by particular prepositions; e.g. I agree *to* a proposal; I agree *with* a person; I concur *in* his judgment; I acquiesce *in* his decision; he is immune *from* infection. The use of wrong prepositions in cases like this is a bad error. (Words with which mistakes are most frequently made are dealt with in separate articles.)

It is important to realize that an idiom may not be varied at the whim of an individual writer. The maltreatment of idiom is a common fault in writing. It

arises either from the desire for novelty in expression or from the confusion of two similar phrases. Examples :

He nearly died *with* laughter. (The proper idiom is *died of*.)

By virtue of his work for the hospitals, he deserves the respect of all humanitarians. (*In* virtue of ; or, *by* reason of.)

The Buddhists, with a view to *get* the help of the Catholics, and to *implicate* them in the rebellion, maliciously spread false rumours. (With a view to *getting* ; or, in order to *get*.)

After three hours' search they gave him up *as* lost (*for* lost ; but we may give up a *task as hopeless*).

As regards production of business, we have another record to register, and we can claim still another direction in which we have *set the lead to* a new development likely to be of service to the insuring public (*given* a lead in ; or, *set* the pace in).

Your company is keeping *abreast with* the latest improvements in plant and machinery (keeping abreast *of* ; or, keeping pace *with*).

IF AND WHEN.

If and when is a meaningless tag much favoured by writers who think that their utterances can be made more impressive by a spurious legal precision in phraseology. Why is not either *if* or *when* alone sufficient in the following examples ?—

If and when production overtakes consumption, the industry will have another difficult period to face.

With reference to the opening lines of your recent leader, I am afraid that *if and when* the Deposited Book passes through its troubled journey, there will be many other surprises disclosed.

ILLEGIBLE—INELIGIBLE.

Illegible means *unreadable.*

His writing is so bad as to be almost *illegible.*

Ineligible means *not fit to be chosen; not suitable.*

He is *ineligible* for the post because he is above the age-limit.

IMMUNE.

This word should be followed by *from* and not *to.*

Inoculation makes people *immune from* certain diseases.

IMPERVIOUS.

Followed by *to.*

The rock is *impervious to* water.

He is *impervious to* criticism.

IMPIOUS.

Pronounced: im'pĭous.

IMPLY—INFER.

These words are often confused. *Infer* means *deduce, conclude.*

In a particular statement a man may *imply* more than he actually says. If I see his drift I *infer* what he leaves unexpressed.

In the following cases, *imply* is the right word—

His letter of yesterday seems to *infer* that he will not be in London during the coming week.

Dear Sir,—A headline in your issue of even date proclaims "£500,000 Contract for the Clyde," *inferring,* no doubt, some fresh work for Scotland.

INCIDENT.

Followed by *to.*

Measles is a disease *incident to* childhood.

INCREDIBLE—INCREDULOUS.

Incredible means *not worthy of belief.*

His story was so full of unlikely details that it was *incredible.*

Incredulous means *not readily believing* (applied to persons).

In spite of my efforts to convince him, he remained *incredulous.*

For some time the public was *incredulous of* the stories of wealth obtained from the new goldfields.

INCULCATE.

Mistakes are often made in the preposition following this word. We inculcate a principle or an idea *on* (*upon*) someone. The following sentences contain errors—

The Chancellor of the Exchequer must *inculcate* his colleagues in the Government *with* the principles of economy to which he professes to adhere. (Inculcate *on* his colleagues the principles . . .)

Not only must there be shown an increasing desire to give better rewards for better work, but employers must practise the efficiency they desire through their management to *inculcate into* their workmen. (Inculcate *on*, or, instil *into*, their workmen.)

(Cp. INFUSE and INSTIL.)

INDICT, INDICTMENT.

Pronounced: indīt', indīt'ment.

INDIRECT SPEECH.

(See REPORTED SPEECH.)

INDIVIDUAL.

Individual is used by the ignorant as if it meant nothing more than *person.* Inferior (especially comic)

writers love to talk of "a seedy-looking individual," "an individual of unprepossessing appearance," and so on. *An individual* is really a *single* person, as opposed to a group or class. Thus we may say that a staff achieves its highest efficiency when every *individual* in it does his best work; or—a state is prosperous when the majority of the *individuals* composing it are prosperous. In both these cases, the idea of contrast between a single person and a collection of people is present. Unless such a contrast is intended, the word *individual* should not be used.

INDULGE IN.

To indulge in something is to take pleasure freely in it. It is obvious, therefore, that what we indulge in must be something pleasurable. Yet this expression is often wrongly used instead of *take part in, engage in,* with reference to things which are distinctly unpleasant, e.g.—

> Those who do not wish to *indulge in* a long and arduous course of study can acquire the necessary information by our special system.

INFINITIVE.

The part of a verb known as the infinitive is generally easily recognizable because it is preceded by *to*. The simple present infinitive of the verb *see* is *to see*. (I hope *to see* the match. *To see* him now is impossible. I went *to see* him yesterday.) The continuous form is *to be seeing*. The perfect infinitive is *to have seen* (continuous form: *to have been seeing*).

(See SPLIT INFINITIVE.)

INFRINGE.

Infringe is not followed by *on*, although *encroach* is.

> The company was brought into court for *infringing* the patent rights of a rival firm.

But—

The manager thought his assistant was *encroaching on* functions that did not belong to him.

INFUSE.

This word must be followed by *into*. We infuse an emotion *into* somebody; we do not infuse somebody *with* an emotion.

He *infused* such a spirit of enthusiasm *into* his men that his department soon became the most efficient in the store.

(Cp. INCULCATE, INSPIRE, and INSTIL.)

INIMICAL.

Followed by *to*.

We shall find our lack of capital *inimical to* further progress.

IN ORDER THAT.

In order that is normally followed by *may or might*.

I am writing to-day *in order that* he *may* receive the letter to-morrow.

I wrote yesterday *in order that* he *might* receive the letter to-day.

Occasionally *shall* or *should* may be used in the second clause, but *can* or *could* and *will* or *would* are always wrong. Examples of the error—

Firms change their posters frequently in order that the public *shall* not become indifferent to their advertisements (*may*)

The firm is granting additional holidays now in order that the men *can* work longer hours next month (*may*).

They hurried the work as much as possible in order

that the building *would* be ready for occupation in April (*might*).

In these cases, *shall*, *can*, and *would* might be retained if *so that* were used instead of *in order that*.

INSPIRE.

We can inspire an emotion *in* a man, or we can inspire him *with* an emotion.

During the period in which we worked together, he *inspired* me *with* a great admiration for his powers.

During a war a leader is required who will *inspire in* his countrymen a faith in their ability to win.

(Cp. INFUSE and INSTIL.)

INSTIL.

This word must be followed by *into*, and not *with*.

I tried to *instil into* him a proper sense of his position (*not*—instil him with . . .).

(Cp. INCULCATE, INFUSE, and INSPIRE.)

INTENSE—INTENSIVE.

Intensive is being wrongly used nowadays as if it had the same meaning as *intense*. *Intensive* is really a technical word, and it is usually known to the ordinary person only in the phrase *intensive cultivation*.

By *intensive* methods the farmer increases the production of a given area of land through the use of fertilizers.

In the following examples, *intensive* is clearly wrong—

They were doing, and would continue to do, all they could to meet the increasing and *intensive* competition (*intense*).

America is not the originator of the system of payment by weekly or monthly instalments, but the plan,

by reason of *intensive* advertising and "super-salesmanship" methods, has become more generally adopted in America than in any other country.

(If *intensive* were correctly used in connection with advertising, it would mean that a firm, instead of scattering its advertisements throughout the country, limited its publicity campaign to a particular area so as to obtain the maximum return in that area.)

The voting of a new 10,000-ton armoured ship by the Reichstag is a tribute to the *intensive* propaganda which the naval interests in Germany have been conducting for the past few years (*vigorous*).

INTERJECTION.

An interjection is a word expressing sudden emotion, e.g. Oh! Alas!

IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES.

(See UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES.)

IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD (REGION) OF.

Why do financial journalists and others delight in the four-word phrase *in the neighbourhood* (or *region*) *of* as a substitute for the simple *about*, as in the following examples?—

The total benefit which the Union has received from price movements during the past year seems to be *in the neighbourhood of* £5,000,000.

A music-hall share, which at best must be classed as speculative—quoted *in the region of* par not so long ago, has by this deal been made a sound investment.

It is not obvious what special attraction this phrase has to justify the breach of the sound rule that several words should not be used when a single one will suffice.

INTRANSITIVE VERB.

(See TRANSITIVE VERB.)

INVEIGLE.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* gives the pronunciation : invē'gle ; but invā'gle is very common, and should no doubt be allowed as an alternative.

INVENTORY.

Pronounced : in'ventory.

INVERTED COMMAS.

Inverted commas (" ") are used to mark off directly reported speech (i.e. the actual words used by a speaker), or words quoted from written matter. The following examples illustrate not only the use of inverted commas, but the use of the comma and the capital letter in conjunction with them—

" That is very unlikely," he said at once.

I felt bound to ask, " Do you think so ? "

" Now you must agree," he continued, " that very little has so far been done in the matter."

IRREFUTABLE.

The accent may be on either the second or the third syllable.

IRREVOCABLE.

The accent is on the second syllable.

IT'S ME.

As will be seen from the article on CASE, it is grammatically wrong to say " It's me," because *me* is a predicative pronoun, and therefore should be in the

nominative case (*I*). But the expression is so well established in the colloquial language, even of the educated classes, that it is pedantic to object to it.

-IZE or -ISE?

Should we use the spelling *-ize* or *-ise* in verbs like *criticize, organize, italicize*? Which of the two spellings is strictly correct depends on the history of the particular word. The great majority of such verbs should have *-ize*, if we consider their derivation, but in a number of quite common words *-ise* is correct. How is the ordinary person with a limited knowledge of etymology to know when he should write *-ize* and when *-ise*? Many people cut the Gordian knot by spelling all such words with *-ise*, and English printers very commonly adopt the same practice. The printers of this book, however, follow the recommendation of *The Authors' and Printers' Dictionary* and use *-ize*; and this spelling is preferred by such important publications as *The Times* and *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*. In the absence of general agreement on the matter, the reader may please himself. But if he elects to write *-ize* he should be careful to remember those words which must always have *-ise* (advertise, comprise, despise, devise, disguise, enterprise, exercise, supervise, surprise, etc.).

JOB.

This word has many colloquial uses which are not admissible in the literary language—

> It's a good job he does not know; He has a job worth a thousand a year; They will have a hard job to finish in time; It's no use coming to me about it: it's not my job; etc.

In writing, use *task, post, appointment, business*, etc., and not *job*, according to the sense required.

JUDGEMENT—JUDGMENT.

Either spelling is allowable in modern usage.

JUDICIAL—JUDICIOUS.

Both words contain the root idea of judgment; but the application of *judicial* is limited to law courts and legal matters, whereas *judicious* means showing judgment, discernment, prudence in the ordinary concerns of life. A court of law transacts *judicial* business; a court-martial is a *judicial* assembly convened to inquire into the conduct of someone; a man with the mental qualities of a judge possesses a *judicial* mind and may decide a matter with *judicial* impartiality. But we make a *judicious* selection out of a variety of articles; writers are gratified by the praise of *judicious* readers; and in awkward circumstances we maintain a *judicious* silence.

LABORATORY.

It is proper to put the accent on the first syllable, but accentuation on the second syllable is often heard and is allowable.

LATTER.

The slipshod writer betrays himself most easily perhaps by his fondness for the use of *the latter*. In his inability to control his pronouns, he takes refuge in *the latter*, hoping that his readers will see what previous noun he intends to refer to. But often he bungles even in using this device, and his *the latter* becomes not only awkward, but meaningless. Some examples with comments will make clear what is meant—

(1) No financial assistance of any kind is given by the Canadian Government to immigrants from foreign countries, and the fact that so many of *the latter* are willing to adventure in new lands . . .

Here three nouns (Government, immigrants, countries) precede *the latter*, but *the latter* means the second of two only. Moreover, it is not even the last of the three nouns that the writer intends to refer to, as the reader would naturally expect.

> (2) The increase in the rates is the result of an outcry by farmers that, owing to a lack of proper protection, French agriculture is suffering from a severe crisis, and it is very unfair that *the latter* should not benefit by duties proportional to those enjoyed by industry.

Again several nouns are mentioned, and of these it is natural to take *crisis* as the one to which *the latter* relates. The sentence has to be re-read before it becomes clear that *the latter* stands for *agriculture*.

> (3) It will be readily understood how inconvenient it is to small boarding-house proprietors or tradesmen to have to send for their letters on Saturday, or else wait till Monday. Competition is keen, and it may mean the loss of pounds in the *latter* event.

Here the *latter* does relate to the second of two things, it is true ; but the connection is so vague that the passage has to be read twice before the meaning is grasped.

The latter serves a good purpose in conjunction with *the former*, but writers would generally do well to avoid using it by itself. It can frequently be replaced by an ordinary personal pronoun (*he, it, they,* etc.), perhaps with some readjustment of the sentence ; otherwise, in order to avoid clumsiness and obscurity, the antecedent noun should be repeated.

LAY—LIE.

These two verbs are often confused. *To lay* is transitive, i.e. it is followed by an object (to lay a book on the table, to lay a foundation-stone, etc.) ; whereas *to*

lie is intransitive (to lie down, to be lying in the road). The principal parts of the two verbs are—

	Present Tense	*Past Tense*	*Perfect Tense*
(1)	I lay	I laid	I have laid
	I am laying	I was laying	I have been laying
(2)	I lie	I lay	I have lain
	I am lying	I was lying	I have been lying

LESS.

Less should be used only in connection with quantity (less material, less ability); when number is expressed, *fewer* is the correct word. The following sentence contains an error—

> On the omnibuses the best day is Saturday, with an average of 5,338,970 passengers carried; Wednesday comes second with roundly 600,000 *less* passengers (*fewer*).

LETTERS: CORRECT FORM, PUNCTUATION, etc.

This article is concerned only with business letters. Many formalities necessary in business communications are omitted in familiar correspondence between friends.

Business letters are constructed on a stereotyped plan: they contain the following parts—(*a*) Heading; (*b*) Name and Address of Recipient; (*c*) Salutation; (*d*) Body of the Letter; (*e*) Subscription and Signature. Notes on each of these parts are given below.

(*a*) **Heading**. The note-paper of business firms usually has a printed heading (giving name of firm, name of partners, address, telephone number, etc.). If the address of the firm has to be written or typed, it will appear (followed by the date of dispatch) thus—

39–41, Parker Street,
Kingsway,
London, W.C.2.
2nd March, 19...

19, Queen's Sq.,
Manchester.
15th Jan., 19...

Note the use of the comma and of the full stop. Sometimes a comma is not inserted after the number of the house or premises. In writing dates, the order *15th Jan.*, is preferable to *Jan. 15th.* The use of numbers only (*15.1.29*) is not recommended. The following are the recognized abbreviations for the months—*Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec.* There are no abbreviations for *May, June, July. March* and *April* may be either written in full or shortened to *Mar., Apr.*

(*b*) **Name and Address of Recipient.** The name and full address of the person to whom the letter is sent must always appear. Sometimes it is put at the foot of the letter, but generally it is written or typed at the left-hand side below the address and date, and before the salutation (Dear Sir, etc.); thus—

H. J. Barker, Esq.,
48, Mount Road,
Folkestone.

Mr. James Hardwick,
4, Landon Crescent,
Bath.

Messrs. Haig & Co., Ltd.,
Timber Merchants,
56, Condor St.,
Gravesend.

NOTES.

1. A full stop is not always used for abbreviations like *Mr., Messrs.* On this point, see FULL STOP.

2. On the use of *Mr.* and *Esq.*, see MR. OR ESQ.

3. *Messrs.* (Fr. *Messieurs*) is applied to partnerships and limited companies. It should not be used when the firm has an impersonal name, e.g. *The London General Omnibus Co.*

4. In letters sent to limited companies and large corporate bodies, it is usual to address the General Manager, the Secretary, or other responsible official.

5. For special forms of address and salutation for persons of rank or high office, see TITLES : SPECIAL FORMS OF ADDRESS AND SALUTATION.

(*c*) **Salutation.** The salutation (*Sir, Dear Sir, Dear Sirs, Gentlemen, Dear Mr. . . . ., Madam, Dear Madam, Mesdames*) is put immediately below the name and address of the recipient.

Sir is very formal, and is not now often used in business correspondence, though it is regularly employed by Government departments.

Dear Sir is the regular salutation to-day in all cases where nothing more than a business relationship exists between the correspondents.

Dear Mr. . . . is used when the writer has personal acquaintance with the recipient, and when he wishes to adopt a more familiar tone than is suggested by *Dear Sir.*

Dear Sirs is the usual salutation in the case of letters addressed to *Messrs. . . . . .* (Obviously *Dear Sir* would be incorrect.)

Gentlemen is falling out of use except for letters addressed to boards of directors, committees, or public bodies.

(*d*) **Body of Letter.** In drafting the body of the letter it is essential to observe rules of paragraphing—

1. The opening paragraph must briefly introduce the subject-matter. If the letter is a reply, reference will be made to previous correspondence, thus—

I have received (or, *am in receipt of*) *your letter of*

the 5th inst., . . . We have pleasure in acknowledging the receipt of your letter of yesterday, . . In reply (or, *with reference*) *to your letter RP/J of the 3rd May . . .*

This opening paragraph may, and frequently does, consist of only one sentence. Sometimes a title is inserted just below the salutation in order to give the reader immediate indication of the contents, e.g.—

Re Sale of 79, Fall's Road, Coventry.

Appointment of Secretary to Hill Farm Golf Club.

2. In a letter about a single topic, all the facts and explanatory details will be given in the second paragraph. If, however, several matters have to be dealt with, a separate paragraph must be devoted to each. The first line of each paragraph should be indented.

3. In many letters the final paragraph (like the first) contains only one sentence, or even a short conventional phrase, such as—

Awaiting the favour of your commands; Assuring you of our best attention at all times; Thanking you in anticipation.

If such participle-phrases are used, the subscription must contain a pronoun (*I* am, *We* remain, etc.); otherwise a grammatical fault is committed. (See UNRELATED PARTICIPLE.)

When a letter sets out opinions or states a case, the final paragraph will, of course, be very important, for it will contain the conclusion to which the arguments lead. It may be of some length.

(*e*) **Subscription and Signature.** The subscription must agree in wording with the salutation. *Yours faithfully* is the commonest form for business letters. *Yours truly* may be used in the same circumstances. Both these forms accompany *Dear Sir* as salutation. *Yours very truly* is appropriate for a slightly more intimate letter,

when *Dear Mr. . . . .* appears as salutation. *Yours sincerely* and *Yours very sincerely* occur in business letters only when the writer is addressing a personal friend with whom he can properly drop formalities. In such cases, the salutation is *Dear Mr. . . . .*, or the still more intimate *Dear So-and-so*. *Yours respectfully*, *Yours obediently*, and *Your obedient Servant* are not often used to-day in business. *Your obedient Servant* is retained to some extent in official correspondence.

Except when the letter closes with a participle-phrase (see above), the use of *I am, I remain, We beg to remain,* etc., in the subscription is optional.

The following examples illustrate correct punctuation and use of capital letters—

I am,
Yours faithfully,
J. R. Townly.

We are, dear Sir,
Yours faithfully,
Robertson & Sons, Ltd.
H. Roper,
Manager.

In the signature the name of the firm is often typed or imprinted with a rubber stamp. The responsible official signs his name beneath and adds the description of his position (as in the second example above). Unimportant letters and post cards are frequently signed by a clerk, thus—

The Metropolitan Cement Co., Ltd.,
per (or *p.*) *F. Marchant ;*

or *For The Metropolitan Cement Co., Ltd.,*
F. M.

If an official of a firm has been granted legal power of attorney to sign on behalf of the principal, *per pro.* or *p.p.* (abbreviation of the Latin *per procurationem*) is prefixed to the signature, thus—

Philp, Stanford & Co.,

per pro. (or *p.p.*) *C. Manton.*

LETTERS IN THE THIRD PERSON.

Short letters of a very formal character are sometimes written in the third person. The address of the writer and the date are put at the end. The name and address of the recipient are not given at the head. There is no signature. The following is a specimen—

Mr. H. W. Barton very much regrets that owing to a previous engagement he cannot be present at the concert on 6th April in aid of the Cottage Hospital. He hopes the evening will be a success, and he has much pleasure in enclosing a cheque for £5 as a subscription to the fund.

The Willows,

Cheshunt.

4th April, 19...

In such letters the third person must be maintained throughout, i.e. after beginning with *he*, the writer must not lapse into *I*.

LIKE.

As an adjective, *like* is peculiar in being able to govern a noun or pronoun in the accusative case: it thus resembles a preposition—

He is like his brother. He is like me.

(*Like* governs *brother* and *me* in these sentences.)

But there is another use of *like* in vulgar language, and this is to be avoided. Examples are—

I cannot type rapidly *like* you do.
I wish you had painted it *like* you said you would.

Here the word introduces a subordinate clause of comparison, i.e. it is followed by a verb (*can, said*). But *like* is not a conjunction, and should not therefore be used in this way. *As* should be used in both cases.

LITERAL(LY).

Many people who use *literal* and *literally* do not understand what the words mean, and consequently they perpetrate absurd errors. *Literally* means the opposite of *figuratively* or *metaphorically*; a *literal* statement has to be interpreted according to the letter. If we say that an artist *starved* for some time before achieving success, we generally mean that he made very little money and could barely live. If we said he *literally starved*, we should mean that he actually did not have sufficient food to support life. It is wrong to say that you were *literally stunned* by the news if you did not fall down unconscious. Here are some examples of the misuse of the word—

I have struggled hard at golf: I have *literally* removed mountains.

(The writer of this remark meant to be funny: he was funnier than he knew.)

One of the main features of markets last week was the extraordinary rush to buy shares on Monday for "new time." Dealers in the industrial markets, especially those interested in the more popular shares, were *literally* mobbed by brokers who had buying orders.

(No doubt *literally* is intended to mean *almost*.)

I cannot too strongly emphasize that the British

industrialist, who fears no ordinary competition, is terribly hampered by increasing rates and taxation, higher railway rates, and so on, until the burden is *literally* too heavy to be borne.

(Why *literally*? The word *burden* is obviously to be taken metaphorically. The required adverb seems to be *really*.)

Sir,—I have long been convinced that there is a lack of method in the way jurors are summoned. For 40 years I have been *literally* " peppered " with summonses to appear at one court or another.

(After inserting *literally*, the writer uses inverted commas to show that *peppered* is not to be taken literally. This is sinning against the light.)

LONGEVITY.

Pronounced: lŏnjĕ'vity.

LONG WORDS INSTEAD OF SHORT.

There is no special virtue in the long word. You do not make your writing more effective by discarding the short, plain word for a longer and more pretentious substitute. Yet the pointless use of polysyllabic variants is very common, e.g.—

The Prince was present at the *initial* performance (first).

He was most *meticulous* in carrying out the duties assigned to him (careful, exact).

The scheme did not *materialize* (was not carried out).

The Government *evidenced* no desire to meet this *eventuality* with firmness (showed; situation).

The *meteorological* conditions did not favour a good day's sport (weather).

He occupied a house *in close proximity* to the Town Hall (near, close to).

They gained notoriety as the *protagonists* of the Women's Suffrage Movement (leaders).

Nobody last week *visualized* the situation which has now arisen (expected, foresaw, imagined).

The excessive use of long words generally leads to clumsiness and pomposity in style, and not infrequently it produces obscurity.

MAJORITY.

When *majority* means *superiority in numbers*, it must be treated as singular.

The Government's majority *is* so small that a General Election is imminent.

When it means a group of people superior in number to another group, it may be regarded as singular or plural according to whether the group or the individuals composing it are uppermost in the mind. (See the section on Collective Nouns in ERRORS IN AGREEMENT.)

The Government majority *was* hard pressed during the passage of the Bill.

The Conservative majority *were* elated at *their* victory.

When it means merely *most men, people*, etc., it is plural.

The majority of the audience *were* disappointed by the lecture.

Of those who take the examination, the majority *fail* in the foreign language.

MEDIOCRE.

Pronounced: mē'diōker.

METAPHOR.

Metaphor consists in the substitution of one name or

term for another in such a way as to imply a comparison ; e.g.—

The proposal produced a *storm* of protest.

(The word *storm* is not to be taken literally : the protests were so violent as to be *like* a storm.) Metaphor is a valuable means of giving vividness to a statement ; thus it is arresting to be told that " Palmerston was very bold ; and nothing gave him more exhilaration than to steer the ship of state in a high wind, on a rough sea, with every stitch of canvas on her that she could carry." But in using figurative language of this sort there are pitfalls for the unwary. When a metaphor has once been adopted it must be continued throughout the sentence. Ludicrous results are often produced by the sudden dropping of a metaphor, or the introduction in the same sentence of another metaphor inconsistent with the first. A collection of examples taken from the daily Press and from current literature will make clear how easy it is to come to grief in this matter—

(1) The recommendations of the Standing Committee appointed under the Merchandise Marks Act that all currants, sultanas, and raisins shall be marked with the country of origin has caused a slight flutter of protest in the grocery world ; while Free Traders, *scenting the thin*, safeguarding *edge* of a Protectionist *wedge*, are *sniffing* inquiringly and hostilely round the Committee's report.

(The two totally different metaphors of (*a*) an animal scenting an enemy and (*b*) the thin end of a wedge, have been mixed.)

(2) " Let us take steps to *purge* the Republican Party of the *stigma* of oil money given to the Republican National Committee for campaign funds," urges Senator Borah.

(A stigma is a branded mark, a stain : it cannot be purged.)

(3) Mr. Nye declares to-day that there is reason to believe that the investigation has *scratched* only the *surface* in discovering the grand total of the money *poured* into the Republican campaign funds, as well as the *sources* of this cash.

(Mr. Nye has jumbled together the notions of prospecting for mineral wealth and of exploring the sources of a river.)

(4) A large number of governing men are always better than the bad laws they administer or the brutal commands they receive. This, coupled with the certainty that oppression carried beyond a certain point will make men rebel, has *tempered* the most cutting *blades* of despotism, has made bearable systems which, on paper, seem destructive of all freedom, elasticity, and joy.

(This passage from a well-known writer contains a curious error. From the context it is clear that in using the word *tempered* he was thinking of the metaphor of tempering the wind to the shorn lamb. But, unfortunately, he introduced the second metaphor of the sword. To temper a sword is to make its edge more sharp. He has thus said the opposite to what he intended.)

MR. or ESQ.

The title *Esq.* ought strictly to be confined to graduates of universities, Members of the House of Commons, private gentlemen, and the members of certain professions. For this reason it used to be customary in business correspondence to address tradesmen as *Mr.* Although this practice is still observed to some extent, the tendency nowadays is to use *Esq.* irrespective of the status of the person addressed.

MILITATE.

Followed by *against.*

His bad manners will *militate against* his success in business.

MINIMIZE.

This is one of the words that have become fashionable and are therefore carelessly used. *To minimize* is *to reduce to a minimum* (i.e. *the smallest possible amount*). It should not be used to mean *reduce* or *underestimate* as in the following examples—

Before long there will be attempts to organize air-routes that will *minimize* the time taken to travel from one part of the Empire to another (reduce, or greatly reduce).

While I do not wish to *minimize* the strides made by wireless telegraphy during the past year, I maintain that there is room for both the beam and the cable systems (underestimate).

MINUTES OF MEETINGS.

This is not the place in which to deal with the technical details of minuting, but as minutes of meetings follow a more or less stereotyped form, it will be useful to give a specimen set of minutes for the guidance of secretaries of committees.

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE OF THE BLANKTOWN RATEPAYERS' ASSOCIATION HELD AT 8 P.M. ON THE 6TH JAN., 19..

The following members were present—

Mrs. S. Jameson, Miss Philpots, Messrs. H. J. Taylor, R. F. Lloyd, E. Smith, S. Raynor, R. P. Tozer, B. R. Horsley.

1. The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed.

Business arising from the minutes—

The Chairman read a letter received from the Borough Council in reply to the Committee's communication of the 11th Nov., regarding the Swimming Baths.

2. *Correspondence.* The Secretary read—

(*a*) Letter from Mr. H. J. Barlow resigning his membership of the Publicity Sub-committee on the grounds of ill-health.

The Secretary was instructed to send a suitable reply.

It was agreed to ask Mr. H. Antrim to serve in place of Mr. Barlow.

(*b*) Letter from the Manager of the Blanktown Assembly Rooms informing the committee that the Rooms would not be available for the General Meeting of the Association on 10th Feb.

The Secretary was instructed to make inquiries regarding another suitable hall.

3. *Reports.*

(*a*) The Treasurer's Report was read and adopted.

(*b*) The Report of the Publicity Sub-committee was read and adopted.

4. *Site of the New Recreation Ground.*

The Secretary read a letter from the Borough Council stating that they would be willing to receive a deputation to put forward the views of the Association regarding the site of the proposed new Recreation Ground.

It was resolved that the Council's offer should be accepted, and that a deputation of three should be appointed.

The following members were elected to serve—
Miss Philpots, Messrs. S. Raynor and B. R. Horsley.

5. *Resolution.*

It was proposed by Mr. H. J. Taylor, seconded by Mr. R. F. Lloyd, and resolved that the next Annual General Meeting should be asked to sanction the alteration of Rule X by the addition of the words "and three additional members to be co-opted by the General Committee."

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 9.30 p.m.

NOTES

(1) Minutes are intended to give a concise record of the decisions arrived at and the business transacted. Details of speeches are, therefore, not given except in special circumstances.

(2) In the case of important resolutions, the names of the proposer and the seconder, and a record of the voting, may be included. Generally, however, these details are omitted.

MISCHIEVOUS.

Pronounced: mis'chĭvous.

MOOD.

The tenses of a verb are grouped into three "moods": the *indicative*, the *imperative*, and the *subjunctive*.

1. The Indicative Mood is used in statements and questions—

He *came* yesterday. *Did* you *see* him?

2. The Imperative Mood is used in commands and entreaties. The subject is always in the second person (*you*)—

Open the door.

3. The Subjunctive Mood is used when we are not stating a fact (as we are when we use the indicative),

but are asserting something as being *thought of* as desirable or possible.

I wish he *were* here.

The subjunctive has different forms from those of the indicative, as is shown by the following lists—

PRESENT TENSE (" to be ")

Indic. I am, thou art, he is ; we are, you are, they are.
Subj. I be, thou be, he be ; we be, you be, they be.

PAST TENSE

Indic. I was, thou wast, he was ; we, you, they were.
Subj. I were, thou wert, he were ; we, you, they were.

PRESENT TENSE (" to see ")

Indic. I see, thou seest, he sees ; we, you, they see.
Subj. I see, thou see, he see ; we, you, they see.

In the past tense of " to see," the forms of the indicative and the subjunctive are the same.

(See SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD : MODERN USAGE.)

MULTIPLE SENTENCE.

(See DOUBLE SENTENCE, MULTIPLE SENTENCE.)

MUTUAL.

The use of *mutual* is fraught with danger. It is necessary to be clear about its meaning. If we say that Jones and Smith entertain *mutual* suspicion, we mean that Jones is suspicious of Smith, and Smith is suspicious of Jones ; that is, there is a reciprocal feeling between them. It is not possible, therefore, to speak correctly of Robinson as a *mutual friend* of Jones and Smith. Here we mean that Robinson is the friend of Jones and of Smith ; we are not thinking of any reciprocal relationship between

Jones and Smith. Robinson is the *common* friend of the two.

Again, since *mutual* implies the notion of *each other*, these two words should not appear in the same sentence with *mutual*. Incorrect—

> The two friends had a *mutual* influence *on each other* that was all to the good.

(Omit *on each other*.)

MYTH.

A *myth* is " a purely fictitious narrative usually involving supernatural persons, etc., and embodying popular ideas on natural phenomena, etc." Since the word has this definite technical signification, it seems a pity to degrade it and treat it as though it meant merely a fiction, as in the following—

> He died in exile, having lost his distinguished status in the German diplomatic service because he had the courage to oppose the *myths* on which Germany's appetite for war was fed (lies, fictions).

NAÏF, NAÏVE.

Although the original French form is *naïf*, the word is generally spelt *naïve* in English. It is commonly pronounced : nah-ēv ; few people seem to have the courage to anglicize it completely to : nāv.

NAPHTHA.

Pronounced : naftha.

NEAR-BY.

There is growing up a practice of using " near-by " as an adjective, e.g.—

> Motor excursions can be made to all the *near-by* places of interest.

This is apparently an Americanism. The adjective " near-by " is not to be found in the English dictionaries. We may use the two separate adverbs *near by* (. . . to all the places of interest near by), or we may substitute *neighbouring* (. . . to all the neighbouring places of interest).

NEITHER.

Neither refers to two only.

Neither of the two books is to be found.

When more than two are referred to, *none* should be used.

Neither is singular, and should not therefore be followed by a plural verb. Incorrect—

He advances two arguments, neither of which *are* sound (*is*).

NEITHER . . . NOR.

(See RULES OF AGREEMENT, ERRORS IN AGREEMENT, RULE OF PROXIMITY.)

NICE.

In colloquial language, *nice* is used vaguely to describe anything agreeable or pleasant. Many people never employ this adjective in any other way. Yet in literary use it has several important senses, some of which may be illustrated—

The careless writer does not distinguish *nice* (delicate, subtle) shades of meaning.

Whether he did right is a *nice* (delicate) question.

The experiment requires the *nicest* (most precise) attention.

He is determined to make money, and will not be too *nice* (fastidious) about the means he employs.

NOBODY, NO-ONE.

These words are singular and should not be followed by plural words referring to them. Incorrect—

> *No-one* blessed with eyesight should withhold *their* assistance, as the blind workers of London are largely dependent on the amount collected on Geranium Day (his; or, all those blessed . . . should give their . . .).

NOMINATIVE CASE.

(See CASE.)

NONE.

This pronoun may be treated as singular or plural according to the sense. When it means *not a single one*, it must obviously be followed by singular words.

> Of all the arguments that have been brought, *none* (not one) *is* sufficiently strong to convince me.

But when it means *not any*, it may be followed by a plural verb—

> *None* of the characters in this scene *display* any sign of feeling, although a man has just been murdered in the room.

NON-EXISTENCE, NON-SUCCESS, etc.

The unnecessary use of these compounds with *non-* has become fashionable.

> Owing to the *non-appearance* of the principal speaker, the meeting did not begin at the advertised time.
>
> The *non-success* of the company in coming to terms has not deterred them from continuing their efforts.
>
> Fifty years ago alloy steels were almost *non-existent*.

What merits have the *non*-compounds in these sentences that they should be preferred to *absence* (or *lateness*), *failure*, and *unknown*?

NO-ONE.

(See NOBODY, NO-ONE.)

NOT ONLY . . . BUT ALSO.

(See CORRELATIVE CONJUNCTIONS and RULE OF PROXIMITY.)

NOUN.

A noun is the name of a person or of anything that we can think of—*man, James, sailor, town, acting, possession.*

NOUN-CLAUSES.

A noun-clause is a part of a sentence containing a subject and predicate of its own, and having the function of a noun. A noun can be used (1) as the *subject* of a verb, (2) as the *object* of a verb, (3) *predicatively*, (4) in *apposition* to another noun. (See SUBJECT AND PREDICATE, OBJECT, PREDICATIVE WORDS, APPOSITION.) Similarly, a noun-clause can be used in any of these four ways—

(1) *That he will be promoted* is unlikely.

The italicized group of words contains a subject (*he*) and a predicate (*will be promoted*), and it is used as a noun because it is the *subject* of the main verb *is*.

(2) I think *that he will be promoted.*

Here the noun-clause is the *object* of the main verb *think.*

(3) The probability is *that he will be promoted.*

The noun-clause is the equivalent of a *predicative noun.*

(4) I do not believe the rumour *that he will be promoted.*

The noun-clause names the same thing as *rumour* ; either could be taken as the object of *do believe*. The noun clause is, therefore, in *apposition* to *rumour.*

(See CLAUSES.)

NUMBER.

A noun or pronoun is said to be in the *singular* number when it denotes one person or thing, and in the *plural* number when it denotes more than one—

Singular: man, he ; *Plural:* men, they.

A verb is in the same number as its subject.

OBJECT (DIRECT AND INDIRECT).

The object of a sentence or clause is the noun or noun-equivalent that names the person or thing on which the action is performed—

I posted the *letter* (*letter* names the thing on which the action of posting was performed).

I met *him* (*him* names the person who underwent the action of meeting).

The object may be found by asking the questions Whom ? or What ? after the verb—

Whom did I meet ?—*him* (object).

Except when the object is a pronoun ending in *-self* (I hurt *myself*), it always names a person or thing different from the subject.

In the examples given above we have *Direct Objects*. Some sentences contain an *Indirect Object*, i.e. a noun or pronoun naming a person or thing indirectly affected by the action denoted by the verb—

I sent *him* (indirect obj.) the parcel (direct obj.).

I bought my *brother* (indirect obj.) a present (direct obj.).

Note that the indirect object in the first example is equivalent to *to him*, and in the second to *for my brother*.

OBJECTIVE CASE.

This is another name for the Accusative Case.
(See CASE.)

OBLIGATORY.

Two pronunciations exist—(1) oblĭg'ătory, (2) ŏb'lĭgā-tory. The first is to be preferred.

Obligatory is followed by *on*—

The law makes it *obligatory on* proprietors of theatres to take precautions against fire.

OBLIVIOUS.

Followed by *of*.

Oblivious of the manager's presence, he continued his conversation at the telephone.

The use of *to* after this word is fairly frequently met with, but it is a solecism.

OBSCURITY.

The first essential in any piece of writing is that it shall be clear. No statement is satisfactory if it has to be read more than once before the meaning is grasped. This is so obvious that it may seem hardly worth mentioning. Yet, in fact, the paramount need for clarity is too often neglected. In the daily Press (especially in the correspondence columns) and in the reports of business proceedings, there are frequently to be found passages whose meaning is more or less obscured by careless wording or bad sentence-construction. Indeed, in order to avoid vagueness and ambiguity in expression, a writer needs to exercise not only the most watchful attention, but also considerable technical skill. A number of examples of obscure writing are collected below and grouped so as to illustrate some of the main causes of the faults.

1. **Long and Involved Sentences.** An association of British steel manufacturers recently sent a letter to the Press in which the following paragraphs occurred—

The heavy steel industry of the United Kingdom

has, almost without exception, since the termination of the Great War, been struggling against the greatest difficulties, chief among which was the continuously increasing pressure of foreign competition, aided as it was by longer working hours and lower wages of Continental workmen, subsidies to Continental makers by their Government, especially designed to aid exports, low railway rates, negligible social service costs, low rates and low taxation, and depreciating exchanges, in comparison to which the heavy steel makers of the United Kingdom were faced by a high standard of living which necessitated high wages and comparatively short hours of work for their operatives, together with greatly increased charges for transport and social services, which exceeded what was paid for these charges in 1913 by about 230 per cent . . .

The signatories of the rebate scheme are offering substantial rebates at considerable sacrifices to themselves with the object of encouraging British consumers to confine their purchases to British materials manufactured by British workmen, in the certain expectation that the result will be both beneficial to the heavy steel industry and to the consumers of heavy steel products, by reason of reduced steel costs consequent upon increased production and the operation of the steel mills nearer to their full capacity and generally to improving trade conditions in the United Kingdom as a result of once again having the British heavy steel industry busy and prosperous.

What the writers of this letter set out to do was presumably to explain as clearly as possible the disabilities from which the steel industry had been suffering, and the desirability of introducing the rebate scheme. What they actually did was to produce a long rigmarole which is unintelligible until it has been read two or three times. Obviously the passages quoted above should have been

split up into shorter sentences, each containing one definite idea.

The following involved passage is taken from the report of a company meeting—

> He trusted that his survey of the balance-sheet and of certain of the corporation's holdings had served to show that the present strength and position of the corporation had not been built up on haphazard lines, and that those avenues in which the board had chosen to invest somewhat big sums had been in directions to which they had given the closest study and had employed all the resources at their disposal for making as certain as humanly possible that the employment of funds on the principles indicated would be profitable and provide to the corporation increasingly valuable assets.

Again two or three sentences should have been written instead of one.

2. **Faulty Sentence-construction.** The following examples show how the meaning may be obscured if the sentence is badly constructed—

> The inevitable evolution, which has brought about the extinction of the old Liberal Party, is also demonstrated in the manifesto of the expiring residuum of that once great political force, and is almost identical with that issued by the Socialists, and contains the same transparently inaccurate criticisms of the work of the Municipal Reform Council.

What " is almost identical " ? At first sight it seems to be the evolution, but a second reading shows that it must be the manifesto. The confusion results from the telescoping of several facts into the single sentence. The sentence should end with " force," and a new one should follow beginning with " This document is almost identical . . . "

> There lies close at hand a very simple remedy which the vested interests pressing for the continued preference which they have had for many years of using the roads for industrial traffic without paying anything like the cost of the damage they cause oppose, and thus seek to continue to leave as a burden on the community instead of having it placed, as it should be, on that portion of the industry which is properly chargeable.

This is from a report of a company meeting. The first part is made unnecessarily difficult to follow because *oppose* is separated so far from *vested interests*, its subject. And as for the second part of the sentence, what does it mean? What do they seek to continue to leave as a burden? Apparently the remedy. But this is nonsense. Is it the damage? Possibly. But as the sentence is now constructed, nobody would take *it* as referring to *damage*.

3. **Ambiguity in Expression due to Various Causes.**

(*a*) Bad Arrangement of Words—

> Undoubtedly girls gain much from co-education. There is a welcome drop in sentimentalism amongst them, less affectation, due to male influence.

As the phrase *due to male influence* is now placed, it seems to refer to *affectation*, but it should really go with *drop*. Write: "Owing to male influence, there is . . ."

> The Government, while admitting that the heavy steel makers' case had been conclusively proved, declined to render any assistance on the plea of political expediency.

Two meanings are possible here according to whether we take *on the plea of political expediency* with *declined* or *to render*. In order to state clearly the sense evidently intended, we must write: "declined on the plea of political expediency to render . . ."

(*b*) Omission of Necessary Words—

The overthrow of Charles I was ultimately effected by the Independents, who had little more sympathy with the Covenanters than the Anglicans.

Does this mean that the Independents had little more sympathy with the Covenanters than the Anglicans *had*, or that the Independents had little more sympathy with the Covenanters than *with* the Anglicans ?

(*c*) Mere Carelessness in Phrasing—

This is a book to be recommended to many people who think they can write as well as to beginners.

The use of *as well as* here is confusing. The sentence is so worded that the phrase at first seems to mean *as skilfully as*, but it turns out to signify *in addition to*.

An old member of an exclusive club—an inveterate gourmet—classifies clubs as places where one either feeds or dines.

The writer no doubt meant to say that the person quoted divides clubs into two classes—those in which one dines, and those in which one feeds. What he has actually said is that clubs can be " classified " as places where one has the option on a given occasion of either dining or feeding. (It will be observed that *classifies* is now meaningless.)

Yesterday saw a return to the beautiful weather of the last few days, with a good prospect of continuance.

The last phrase is clumsily tacked on to the main statement. The ideas should be given two sentences.

4. **Technical Jargon.** Writers on scientific and technical matters are sometimes seduced into obscurity by their love of the phraseology peculiar to their subject. When they are writing for the initiated, they naturally use the technical terms with which they are familiar. Not infrequently, however, they use a technical jargon

quite needlessly to express what could be equally well put in ordinary English. An appearance of scientific precision is obtained at the expense of intelligibility. This habit becomes inexcusable when the writer is addressing the general reader rather than the specialist. The plain man is given a legitimate cause of complaint by a passage such as the following (taken from a popular work by a well-known economist)—

> When all has been said, however, every aspect of the problem of the efficiency of labour has not been presented. A community is only rendered most efficient, in the broadest sense of the term, when the most valuable productive potentiality of each person has been rendered actual. To bring out the highest powers of the individual and place him at work suited to his capacity, implies an educational system which is successful both in disclosing and training ability and a social system wherein an individual, whatever the grade of his birth, finds no difficulty in making his way into the economic ranks for functioning in which he is well endowed naturally and properly prepared. Given these conditions and a sufficiency of initiative and perseverance in the individual, the vertical mobility of labour is said to be high.

The thought of the passage is really quite simple, but it is given the appearance of difficulty through being clothed in unnecessarily abstract language. The second sentence, in particular, is merely empty jargon. The plain English for it is—" A community has achieved its maximum efficiency only when each member of it is given the opportunity of making the best use of his special ability." The third sentence, too, is made difficult to follow by its clumsy construction : we seem to see the scientist labouring to bring his abstruse ideas within the comprehension of the lay mind.

OF ANY.

The use of *of any* in sentences like the following, though common, is quite illogical, and might well be avoided—

Capt. . . . . has flown the greatest mileage *of any pilot* in the service of Imperial Airways.

Write: "of all the pilots . . .," or, "has flown a greater mileage than any other pilot."

OMISSION OF NECESSARY WORDS.

In certain sentences we may quite properly omit words, e.g.—

Come and see the car (that) I have just bought; it is more powerful than my last (one was).

The words in brackets are supplied mentally, but they need not be written or spoken. Care must be taken, however, not to suppress words when the omission will do violence to sense or grammar—

(1) We already have, in clubs, places where the private interest is practically non-existent, yet few would doubt that there is *as much, if not more*, excessive drinking in these places *as* in the public-house.

(*As much* must be followed by *as*, but *if not more* requires *than*.)

This machine is *as good, if not better than* the one which has just been installed.

(Insert *as* after *good*.)

(2) Your company always has, and will continue to do its utmost on behalf of the shareholders.

(Has *done* and will continue *to do*.)

(3) He ought to have lived at the court of Louis XIV, so marked is his preference for the fashionable world and so cosmopolitan his tastes.

(The verb could be suppressed before *his tastes* if it were the same as that before *his preference*, i.e. *is*; but *are* is

required. Therefore we must write : " so cosmopolitan *are* his tastes.")

ONE.

The genitive case of the indefinite pronoun *one* (meaning *anyone, people in general*) is *one's*. *One* must not be replaced by *he* or *they* in the same context. Incorrect—

> When *one* loses *his* train *he* is annoyed (one's, one).
>
> When *one* enters some people's houses *they have* the uncomfortable feeling that *they are* not wanted (one has, one is).

ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT, IF NOT THE MOST IMPORTANT.

Care must be exercised in using expressions of this type. The following exemplifies a fairly common error—

> The heavy steel makers feel that their industry represents one of the most important, if not the most important, basic industry of the country.

After *one of the most important* we need *industries*, but after *if not the most important* we must have the singular *industry*. The difficulty can be avoided by writing : " feel that their industry is one of the most important basic industries in the country, if not the most important."

ONLY.

When this word is used as an adverb it must be placed next to the word or phrase to which it refers ; otherwise the sense is distorted. This rule is very frequently neglected. Examples—

> The bonnet of the Scots Guards was once *only* saved in the nick of time from abolition by the personal interference of Queen Victoria.

(*Only* is intended to refer to either *in the nick of time* or

by the personal interference of Queen Victoria. It should be placed immediately in front of the one or the other according to the sense required.)

The reason why it has been impossible to establish this night flying service sooner is that at present the route is *only* marked by beacons between London and Paris.

(Alter to—" only between London and Paris.")

(See RULE OF PROXIMITY.)

OTHER.

In the statement of a comparison, *other* must be used after a comparative adjective. It is incorrect to say, " Jones is more efficient than any man in his shop." *Any man* includes Jones, and we are in effect saying that he is more efficient than himself. *Other* must be inserted after *any*: we then separate Jones from the men with whom he is compared.

OTHERWISE.

Otherwise is an adverb meaning *in a different way*, etc. It should not be used as a substitute for an adjective or a noun. It is correct to say—I am not sure whether he acted honestly *or otherwise* (*otherwise* is an adverb qualifying *acted*); but it is wrong to say—I am not sure whether he is honest *or otherwise* (here *otherwise* is substituted for the adjective *dishonest*), or—I must be satisfied of his honesty *or otherwise* (here *otherwise* does duty for the noun *dishonesty*). The second sentence should be written—I am not sure whether he is honest *or not* (*or not* may be omitted), and the third should be simply—I must be satisfied of his honesty.

PARAGRAPH: HINTS ON CONSTRUCTION.

It is hardly necessary to explain that a paragraph is a group of sentences dealing with one idea, and that every

piece of prose of any length must be divided into paragraphs. Everybody with the least experience of writing knows this. But not everybody masters the art of constructing good paragraphs, and this is partly because the importance of the matter is not realized. Yet if a letter or a statement of any kind giving an explanation or an argument is to be made convincing, it is essential that the facts or reasons should be organized into groups which clearly indicate the stages of thought. How can this be done? Of course, a well-built paragraph is ultimately the result of clear thinking; but when the thinking has been done, the written expression of the ideas is facilitated by a knowledge of the technical points concerning paragraph-structure. The purpose of the present article is to explain these technical points.

1. **Unity.** It is necessary first of all to insist on the fact stated in the definition of a paragraph. *All the sentences in a paragraph must relate to one idea.* To say the same thing in another way—no sentence must be included in a paragraph if it does not contribute to the expression of the main idea. This rule seems simple enough; but it is often disregarded. A paragraph must be thought of as a *whole*—as a statement which has *unity*, i.e. singleness of idea.

2. **How to Emphasize the Central Idea.** Obviously, in order to construct an effective paragraph, it is necessary to make perfectly clear what the central idea is. This can be done in more than one way—

(*a*) *The main idea may be stated in the first sentence.* This is the simplest and commonest method. Consider the following paragraph from an article in *The Times*—

> Shareholders in British rubber companies have every reason to be grateful to the Government and the Committee of Civil Research, upon whose report their decision has been based, for terminating the restriction scheme as from the end of October next.

All the disadvantages of that uneconomic scheme have fallen exclusively upon British companies operating in British territory and (to a lesser extent) upon British companies in foreign territory which voluntarily submitted themselves to a degree of restriction but milder than the compulsory variety. All the advantages of the scheme were secured by the growers in the Dutch East Indies and other non-restricting areas which, of course, suffered none of the disabilities of restriction. The great growth of their industry is a measure of the advantages they gained from it. Under the scheme the British sold less rubber than they could produce, received the same price as their competitors, but as their costs were higher by several pence per pound their margin of profit was smaller. On the other hand, the Dutch and other foreign growers sold largely increased amounts of rubber, their costs were consequently lower, and their margins of profit wider. After October the British estates will be able to sell as large amounts of rubber as their competitors, receive the same price and profit margin, since their costs, other things being equal, will be the same. In other words, the removal of restriction will be a benefit and not a menace to those concerned in the British rubber industry.

The theme of the paragraph, stated in the first sentence, is that the British rubber companies will benefit by the removal of restrictions. The following sentences give the reasons for this statement. The advantages of the restrictions to foreign companies and the disadvantages to British companies are explained, and the final sentence rounds off the argument with a repetition, in varied terms, of the main idea.

(*b*) In cases where several facts or reasons are put forward in order to lead up to a conclusion, *the statement of the central idea is reserved for the final sentence.* The

following paragraph illustrates this method of construction—

> Here in the South we have again suffered from the depredations of pirates, while a series of political changes at Canton has also had a hampering effect on mercantile enterprise. In spite of this, the trade of this colony has shown a steady and healthy recovery from the low point reached in the previous year, though it is by no means equal in volume to that of three or four years ago. A distinct improvement has occurred in piece goods, though the trade is now feeling the effect of increased manufacturing costs, and there has been a noticeable activity in the export of wood oil which, blocked on the Yangtze, is finding an exit in the South. Taking all into account, Hong-Kong's record for the year is not unsatisfactory, and there are fair indications that the improvement is likely to continue.

Here a survey of the facts leads to the conclusion, given in the last sentence, that trade in Hong-Kong is not unsatisfactory and is improving.

(*c*) Sometimes the central idea of a paragraph is not stated at all completely in any one of the sentences. In such a case the connection of the facts or ideas must be made very definite, so that the reader may easily grasp the theme. *It should always be possible to express the theme in a single sentence.* Thus, in the following paragraph none of the sentences fully expresses the theme, but the central thought could be set out briefly in these terms—

> The Chinese military and civil authorities who now control the railways are entirely neglecting to provide money needed for maintenance and repairs, and therefore some of the lines will soon become unworkable.

The paragraph—

> It is well known that the maintenance in a state of efficiency of any railway necessitates the current expenditure of a considerable portion of the earned revenue for the upkeep of the permanent way and rolling stock and a hundred and one other essentials. But the Chinese military and civil authorities into whose hands the control of railways has passed have so far entirely ignored this fundamental principle. Intent only on extracting as much money as possible, they have starved the railways of even the most urgent requirements. In such circumstances the rate of deterioration rapidly gathers pace, and it is to be feared that, if some settlement of China's political disputes is not shortly reached and the revenues restored to the railway administrations, some of the lines will before long become unworkable and will need the expenditure of many millions of dollars before they can again be rendered fit for regular traffic.

3. **Examples of Faulty Paragraph-Structure.** A criticism of one or two bad paragraphs will serve to illustrate the principles stated above.

(*a*) Consider the following paragraph from a report of a company meeting—

> Cement manufacturers have for many years and to a considerable extent co-operated to secure reasonable trading conditions. For a period pre-war the acute conditions of over-production and undercutting of prices produced a situation which resulted in there being no adequate return on the capital invested in the industry ; indeed, the earnings of some companies and firms were insufficient to provide for depreciation. No industry called more clearly for the benefit of co-operation than the cement trade, an industry in

which there can never be a monopoly on account of the bounteous distribution of the raw materials and the small area that this country offers for the distribution of the manufactured product.

Let us see how this paragraph is built up. The ideas in the three sentences can be briefly expressed thus—(1) Cement manufacturers have co-operated for many years, (2) competitive conditions before the war were injurious to the industry, (3) the peculiar circumstances of the trade call for co-operation. There is a connection between these ideas, but the writer has not made it sufficiently clear: it is only implied, whereas it should be explicit. Evidently the first sentence is intended to give the topic, but the next two sentences do not reinforce the idea as they should do. If suitable connecting sentences were introduced, and the paragraph were re-cast as follows, it would be much more effective. (The words providing the connections have been italicized)—

> Cement manufacturers have for many years and to a considerable extent co-operated to secure reasonable trading conditions. *The desirability of this policy was brought home to them by their experiences in the years before the war.* For a period the acute conditions of over-production and undercutting of prices produced a situation in which there was no adequate return on the capital invested in the industry; indeed, the earnings of some companies and firms were insufficient to provide for depreciation. *Co-operation was adopted as a means of salvation. The co-operative method of working is, indeed, especially suited to the cement trade, for in this particular industry* there can never be a monopoly on account of the bounteous distribution of the raw materials and the small area that this country offers for the distribution of the manufactured product.

(*b*) The following are the first two paragraphs of an article in *The Times*.

A Day with a Provincial Pack.

Those of us who hunted mildly before the war, and who have since been too busy with the struggles of post-war existence, have often wondered how people manage to hunt nowadays, when country houses are standing empty, farms are derelict, main roads are skating rinks, and hundreds of thousands of new small houses cover what were then green fields. Hunting in Leicestershire and with the other famous packs of course goes on, as we know from the papers, as keenly as ever. But Leicestershire was always for rich men ; the local folk hunted as a matter of course, but there was always a fashionable crowd of visitors. There are still plenty of rich men and women, and Leicestershire in the winter is still the fashion.

But the provincial packs—how do they exist ? The old Mudshire, for instance, where we had so many happy days, now that the Duke's castle is turned into an hotel and half a dozen other great houses into schools or convents : with all the new factories round Muddleton (one on the site of a famous covert), with the main roads—and we did a lot of hunting on the roads—covered with motor-cars like Piccadilly ?

The opening sentence seems to give the main idea of the paragraph, i.e. Some of us wonder how people manage to hunt at all under present-day conditions. But then the writer goes off to talk about hunting in Leicestershire, and we are forced to ask exactly what the connection is, and when he is coming back to his original point. He does not return to it until the sentence—" But the provincial packs—how do they exist ? " But this is made to begin a new paragraph. Why ? Clearly there should be no paragraph-division here. The whole

of the passage quoted should form a single paragraph dealing with the theme suggested in the opening remark. Considerable re-casting is necessary, however, if the topic is to be made clear and the connection of ideas is to be shown. The re-writing might be carried out thus—

> Those of us who hunted mildly before the war, and have since been too busy with the struggles of post-war existence to indulge in the sport, have often wondered how people manage to hunt nowadays, when country houses are standing empty, farms are derelict, main roads are skating-rinks, and hundreds of thousands of new small houses cover what were then green fields. We know from the papers that hunting goes on as keenly as ever in Leicestershire, and we can understand this, for the sport in that county is for rich men. There are still plenty of rich men and women, and so there is still, as there always was, a fashionable crowd of hunting people in Leicestershire during the winter. But the question is how the provincial packs continue to exist. How does the old Mudshire manage, for instance, now that the Duke's castle is turned into an hotel, and half the other great houses have become schools or convents; now that there are new factories round Muddleton (one on the site of a famous covert), and the main roads (we used to do a lot of hunting on the roads) are covered with motor-cars like Piccadilly?

PARAMOUNT.

Followed by *to*.

> In coming to the conclusion not to adopt this scheme we considered the question of expense to be *paramount to* all others.

PARENTHESIS.

The use of Parenthesis, i.e. of a group of words enclosed within brackets, or marked off by dashes, has

its disadvantages and should not be allowed to become a regular feature of one's style. There is, of course, no objection to an occasional and careful parenthesis, as in—

> And would industry be revived faster by clapping a Surtax on the "idle, parasitic, good-for-nothing shareholder" (*as Mr. Shinwell calls him*) than by lowering the rates on his business?
>
> By the mercy of providence, and by one man's vote—*a critical division resulted in a tie*—the County Council had been saved from cramping itself up in the Adelphi.

But a long parenthesis which reads like an afterthought clumsily thrust into the middle of a sentence instead of being given a proper place by itself has a distinctly unpleasant effect. The reader is jerked from one idea to another, and the rhythm of the sentence is spoilt. (See RHYTHM.) Examples—

> Here, where was the happiest place in London to set up a beautiful thing, hard fate had decreed that there should be built—*in the days when art was at its very lowest and people thought of nothing but utility with cheapness*—one of the ugliest structures created by man.
>
> Apparently His Majesty's Government—*perhaps it is the Ministry of Transport: perhaps the movement comes from even higher up*—have come out into the open and are prepared to take a hand. They realize the immense advantage to the capital of the Empire; they are—*we hear to our delight, indeed to our amazement*—prepared to find three-quarters of the cost.

PARTICIPLES.

The Present Participle of a verb ends in *-ing*. It is found in tense forms such as: I am *seeing*, they were

walking. *The Past Participle* sometimes ends in *-ed*, *-d*, or *-t*, sometimes in *-en*, *-n*, or *-ne*, and sometimes has no ending; e.g. walked, said, slept, ridden, sown, gone, rung. It is used to form the perfect tenses (e.g. I have *seen*) and the passive voice (e.g. I am *seen*) of a verb. *The Perfect Participle* contains the auxiliary *having*, e.g. having seen, having walked.

Besides being used with the auxiliary verbs *to be* and *to have*, as explained above, participles are often used alone. They are then *verb-adjectives*—

1. They can be employed like ordinary adjectives to qualify a noun.—A *thriving* business; a *broken* contract.

2. They may introduce an adjective-phrase qualifying a noun or pronoun—

The flood-water, *flowing* along the street, entered the basements of the houses. (The pres. part. *flowing* introduces the adj.-phrase *flowing along the street*, which qualifies *water*.)

Broken by his misfortunes, he retired from business.

Having disposed of this matter, we may proceed to the next item on the agenda.

3. They may be used with a noun or pronoun in Absolute Phrases. (See ABSOLUTE PHRASES.)

(See also UNRELATED PARTICIPLES and CONFUSION OF PARTICIPLE AND GERUND.)

PARTS OF SPEECH.

According to the function they perform in a sentence words are said to belong to one or other of the eight "parts of speech," viz., noun, pronoun, verb, adjective, adverb, preposition, conjunction, interjection. For definitions see separate articles. Note that a given word may belong to more than one part of speech according to its work in a particular sentence. Thus, *round* is an adjective in—I need a *round* piece of wood; a verb in—

The policeman saw the car *round* the corner at high speed; a preposition in—I walked *round* the corner; an adverb in—The postman comes *round* three times a day; a noun in—The actor was given a *round* of applause.

PASSIVE VOICE.

(See VOICE.)

PATENT.

This is usually pronounced pā'tent. Some people say pă'tent in *Patent Office*, *letters-patent*, etc., but there is no good reason for the distinction.

PERCENTAGE.

Percentage is a mathematical term with a perfectly definite technical sense. It does not mean merely *part* or *proportion*. There is no justification for using it in such sentences as—

> Only a percentage of the readers of this journal will agree with the views expressed by the Home Secretary;
>
> A larger percentage of land has this year been laid under grass by English farmers.

The large number of writers who delight in using pseudo-scientific expressions rather than plain English seem to think that 50 *per cent* and 25 *per cent* are always interchangeable with *a half* and *a quarter*, and so they are betrayed into such absurdities as this—

> I was a season-ticket holder at Epsom for years, and can say that the fastest train to or from London now takes 50 per cent longer time than before the war.

PEREMPTORY.

The accent is on the first syllable.

PERFECT INFINITIVE.

The perfect infinitive of a verb is formed with *to have*; e.g. to have seen, to have gone. (See INFINITIVE.)

The perfect infinitive is often used unnecessarily in place of the present infinitive after such expressions as—*I should have liked, he would have been the first,* e.g.—

I should have liked *to have gone* if the weather had been fine.

He would have been the first *to have volunteered* if his services had been needed.

In these cases *to go* and *to volunteer* are required. The notions that I did not in fact go and that he did not volunteer are sufficiently conveyed by the use of *have* in the preceding verbs.

After *hoped, intended, expected,* etc., there is a similar use of the perfect infinitive—

I hoped *to have been* able to finish the work by Christmas.

He intended *to have given* me the money when he saw me.

Again the present infinitive (*to finish, to give*) could be used, but these examples may be defended on the ground that the perfect infinitive conveys idiomatically the idea of the non-fulfilment of the hope or intention. (This idea is not expressed by the main verb.)

PERIPHRASIS.

(See CIRCUMLOCUTION.)

PERMEATE.

This word should not be followed by *through*. Correct use—The influence of irresponsible agitators *permeated* the whole of the factory.

PERSON.

Pronouns standing for the person *speaking* are said to be in the *first person*, e.g. *I*, *us*; those standing for the person *spoken to* are said to be in the *second person*, e.g. *you*; and those standing for the person or thing *spoken about* are said to be in the *third person*, e.g. *he*, *they*. All nouns except those in the vocative case are in the third person. A verb agrees with its subject in person.

PERSONAL PRONOUNS.

Many errors in grammar arise through the misuse of the cases (see ERRORS IN CASE). Such mistakes occur chiefly in connection with the pronouns. The following list of the Personal Pronouns is therefore useful in showing the variety of case-forms—

	Singular			*Plural*	
Person 1st	2nd	3rd	1st	2nd	3rd
Nom. . I	thou (you)	he, she, it	we	you	they
Acc. . me	thee (you)	him, her, it	us	you	them
Gen. . mine	thine (yours)	his, hers, its	ours	yours	theirs
Dat. . me	thee (you)	him, her, it	us	you	them

PERSPICACIOUS—PERSPICUOUS.

These two words are often confused, even by writers who ought to know better. *Perspicacious* means *having mental penetration or discernment*—Even the least *perspicacious* of the European statesmen should have foreseen that war with Germany was inevitable. *Perspicuous* means *clear, easily understood*; it applies to a piece of writing or a speech—This writer has given a *perspicuous* account of a difficult subject.

PHRASE.

In grammatical terminology a phrase is a group of words having no subject and predicate and being

equivalent to a single part of speech. (See ADJECTIVE-PHRASES AND ADJECTIVE-CLAUSES and ADVERB-PHRASES AND ADVERB-CLAUSES.)

PHTHISIS.

The older pronunciation was: thī'sis; but fthī'sis is now becoming usual.

PLEONASM.

(See REDUNDANCY OF EXPRESSION.)

PLURAL NUMBER.

(See NUMBER.)

PLURALS OF COMPOUND NOUNS.

It is sometimes difficult to know what is the correct plural of a compound noun. Generally the most important element in the compound takes the plural sign; but usage varies. Here are some examples.—*Step-sons, sons-in-law, hangers-on, maid-servants, courts-martial, governors-general* (here *general* is an adjective), *lieutenant-generals* (here *general* is a noun), *lord-chancellors, commanders-in-chief.*

Occasionally both elements are pluralized—*men-servants, lords-justices.*

PLURALS OF FOREIGN WORDS.

Many foreign words retain their foreign plural in English. Such words were originally learned and technical. Some of them, however, have passed into the common language and English plurals have been formed. In some cases the foreign and the English plural are merely alternatives; in others they have been differentiated in meaning. A list of foreign words with their plurals is given below—

Latin and Greek. Addendum, addenda; analysis,

analyses ; appendix, appendices ; axis, axes ; basis, bases ; crisis, crises ; criterion, criteria ; erratum, errata ; formula, formulae or formulas ; fungus, fungi or funguses ; genius, genii (familiar spirits) geniuses ; genus, genera ; hypothesis, hypotheses ; index, indices (in mathematics) indexes (to books) ; larva, larvae ; memorandum, memoranda (notes to aid memory) memorandums (legal documents) ; nucleus, nuclei ; oasis, oases ; phenomenon, phenomena ; radius, radii ; series, series ; species, species ; stimulus, stimuli ; stratum, strata ; terminus, termini or teminuses.

French. Beau, beaux ; bureau, bureaux ; portmanteau, portmanteaux.

Italian. Bandit, banditti or bandits ; dilettante, dilettanti ; Fascist, Fascisti or Fascists ; libretto, libretti ; virtuoso, virtuosi.

Hebrew. Cherub, cherubim, or cherubs ; seraph, seraphim.

POPULACE.

This word is not synonymous with *people, public.* It means *the common people, the rabble.*

POSSESSIVE (GENITIVE) CASE.

(See CASE.)

POSSESSIVE PROBLEMS.

(See GENITIVE PROBLEMS.)

POSTHUMOUS.

Pronounced : pŏst′ūmous.

POTENT—POTENTIAL.

Potent means *powerful, cogent—*

There are many strata of British society, comprising

thousands of people, for whom the film is the most *potent* of all educational forces.

Potential means *latent, capable of coming into being or action*—

We have not yet developed or even explored all the *potential* resources of the British Empire.

Every private in the British army is a *potential* field-marshal.

PRACTICABLE—PRACTICAL.

Practicable is applied to something that is feasible, that can be done or brought into use. Nobody is likely to confuse this word with *practical* in such examples as—

A practical mechanic ; a practical knowledge of the business ; his efforts had no practical effect.

But in other cases there is possibility of error. If the Government reject a scheme because it is not *practicable*, they do so because circumstances make it impossible to carry it out : the scheme might be thoroughly *practical*, i.e. useful in effecting the purpose. *Practicable* and not *practical* is the right word in the following—

The British Empire contains large areas where cotton-growing is *practicable.*

Owing to the floods the road through the low-lying plain was not *practicable.*

PRACTICE—PRACTISE.

Practice is a noun.—" Practice makes perfect " ; a doctor's practice.

Practise is a verb.—You must practise more regularly.

PRECEDENCE—PRECEDENT.

The normal present-day pronunciation of these words is : prĕss'ĭdence, prĕss'ĭdent.

PRECIPITATE—PRECIPITOUS.

The adjective *precipitate* means *headlong, hasty, rash, ill-considered*—

The enemy saved themselves by *precipitate* flight.

The firm was greatly embarrassed by the *precipitate* action of the manager in breaking off negotiations without consulting his colleagues.

Precipitous means *steep, like a precipice*—

The *precipitous* descents made the road impracticable for cars.

PREDICATE.

(See SUBJECT AND PREDICATE.)

PREDICATIVE WORDS.

Some verbs, instead of taking an object (see OBJECT), are followed by a noun, a pronoun, or an adjective referring to the subject. This word completes the predicate and is therefore called a predicative word. (The older name was COMPLEMENT)—

1. **Predicative Nouns.** Jones is the *secretary*. The girl became a *typist*. He was elected *captain*.

The italicized words in these sentences name the same person as the subject: they are thus quite distinct from objects. (An object names a person or thing different from the subject, and an action is performed on this person or thing; e.g. They elected a *captain*.)

2. **Predicative Pronouns.** Pronouns may be similarly used—

It is *I*. Was it *you* who did that? No, it was *he*.

3. **Predicative Adjectives** form part of the predicate and refer to the subject—

The man seems *honest*. I am *glad*.

PREFER.

The construction with this verb causes difficulty. We prefer one thing *to* another, or we prefer *doing* one thing *to doing* another. *Prefer* must on no account be followed by *than* instead of *to*. Incorrect—We should prefer to leave early *than* have the discomfort of travelling in crowded trains. The difficulty arises here because *prefer* is followed by an infinitive. We could not say—We should prefer to leave early *to* to have. . . If the word *prefer* is retained in such a sentence the only way out is to say—We should prefer to leave early *rather than* have . . . It would be better, however, to use another verb—We *would rather* leave early than . . .

PREFERABLE.

Followed by *to*. The correct constructions are—

This thing is *preferable to* that ; *Doing* this is *preferable to doing* that.

(See PREFER.)

It is obviously wrong to use the expression *more preferable*, for *preferable* by itself means " *more* desirable."

PREFERENCE.

Like *prefer* and *preferable*, *preference* should be followed by *to*. Incorrect—

He showed an obvious preference for his own plan *over* all the others that were submitted (to).

PREJUDICIAL.

Followed by *to*.

Such unscrupulous conduct must be *prejudicial to* his reputation.

PREMIER.

Pronounced either prĕ'mier or prē'mier.

PREOCCUPIED.

Followed by *with*.

He was so *preoccupied with* the thoughts of his coming speech that he could give no attention to other matters.

PREPOSITION.

A preposition begins a phrase and is said to govern the noun or pronoun in that phrase. (See PHRASE.) E.g.—

The letter is (*in* the basket).
He walked (*through* the office).
The box was (*by* the window).

The prepositions are italicized; the phrases are in brackets; the nouns governed by the prepositions are *basket, office, window*.

Some of the chief prepositions are:—about, above, across, after, against, along, around, at, before, behind, beneath, beside(s), between, by, down, during, except, for, from, in, into, of, off, on, over, round, since, through till, to, towards, under, underneath, up, upon, with.

Many of the above words may also be used as adverbs; e.g. The boy remained *behind* (adv. qualifying *remained*). But—The boy remained *behind* the door (prep. gov. *door*).

There are a few double prepositions, e.g. according to, out of, as to.

PREPOSITIONS AT THE END OF SENTENCES.

It is apparently still widely taught that a sentence should not end with a preposition. There can be no question that there are cases where a final preposition is very inelegant, e.g.—

He was not willing to accept the post that the committee had nominated him *for* (*for which* the committee had nominated him);

> Our agents will call on the customers that the circulars were recently posted *to* (*to whom* the circulars . . .)

But there can also be no question that there are cases where the final preposition is thoroughly idiomatic and elegant. "He asked me what I was laughing *at*," and "Our experiences will give us something to talk *about*" are surely preferable to "He asked me *at what* I was laughing," and, "Our experiences will give us something *about which* to talk."

The fact is that those who try to insist on the avoidance of the final preposition have not considered English idiom sufficiently carefully. Whether a preposition is allowable or not at the end of a sentence must be settled on the merits of the particular case.

PREPOSITIONS USED IDIOMATICALLY.

Particular prepositions are used idiomatically with certain words, e.g. acquiesce *in*, militate *against*, immune *from*, compatible *with*. It is a serious error to use the wrong preposition in such cases. (See IDIOM.)

Separate articles are given on the words which are likely to give rise to mistakes.

PREPOSITIONS USED IN EXCESS.

It is very easy to fall into the habit of writing sentences containing a long string of prepositions. Such sentences may be grammatically accurate, but, at any rate in their worst forms, they are intolerable to anyone who is at all sensitive to prose-rhythm. The following passage was taken from the report of a company meeting: one wonders how the chairman could have read it aloud without shuddering—

> It was their determination *to* act *in* a spirit *of* loyalty *to* the important and essential principles *of*

standardization and co-ordination *in* the supply *of* electricity *throughout* the country *on* sound economic lines *for* the recognition *of* which some *of* them had striven *during* very long periods *of* time.

(The final circumlocution *during very long periods of time* was used instead of *for a very long time* apparently in order that one more preposition might be dragged in.)

The quotation of one or two more examples of the unpleasant results produced by a plethora of prepositions should put the reader on his guard against this particular malady. These sentences should be read aloud—

We find it difficult *to* reconcile the British conviction *with* their present unwillingness *to* recognize our right *to* build a limited number *of* the type *of* ships we would desire, or *with* their willingness *to* risk the success *of* this conference because they fear the problematical possession *by* us *during* the life *of* this treaty *of* a small number *of* 8 in. gun cruisers.

This brings him into religious conflict with the newly-conquered Moslem states, for example, the Hejaz, whose susceptibilities he is forced to wound *in* deference *to* the abhorrence *of* his followers *for* certain features *of* old-established ritual connected *with* the traditions *of* Islam. (Write: because his followers abhor certain features of old-established ritual connected with Mohammedan traditions.)

The directors greatly appreciate this recognition *of* the good work which the company is doing *to* develop the generation and distribution *of* electricity *in* the West Riding and *of* the importance *of* the company *in* the settlement *of* any schemes which may be made *for* the improvement *of* the supply *in* that area.

Such sentences generally need to be completely re-expressed, fewer abstract nouns being used.

PREVENT.

We may say—I will prevent him *from* doing this, or, I will prevent *his* doing this; but not—I will prevent him doing this. (See CONFUSION OF PARTICIPLE AND GERUND.) An example of the error—

> By effecting economies and by improving equipment the tramway companies are doing all they can to *prevent* their position *being* worsened. (Write: prevent their position from being worsened, or, prevent the worsening of.)

PREVIOUS(LY).

Idiomatic usage requires *previous*, and not *previously*, in such sentences as—

> It will be necessary to hold another meeting of the directors *previous to* signing the contract.

PRINCIPAL—PRINCIPLE.

Principal is either an adjective or a noun. Used as adjective—This is his principal source of income. As noun—He invested the principal at 7 per cent. He is the principal of the college.

Principle is always a noun and means *primary element, general law, rule of conduct*, etc.—

> He is ignorant of the first principles of politics.
> He is a man of no principles.
> The two machines work on the same principle.

PROFILE.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* gives the pronunciations: prō'fēl, prō'fīl. The former is probably the more common to-day. In American English prō'fīl is also heard.

PROFUSE.

This word may be followed by either *in* or *of*—

The Prince was *profuse in* his expenditure on pleasures.

To allay the fears of his opponent he was *profuse of* compliments and assurances of his goodwill.

PRONOUN.

A pronoun is a word used in place of a noun. By means of a pronoun—

1. We avoid the repetition of a noun. Thus we say—

My friend was introduced to the manager, to *whom he* quickly explained the mistake, and *they* were soon on cordial terms;

instead of—

My friend was introduced to the manager, and my *friend* soon explained the mistake to the manager, and my *friend* and the *manager* were soon on cordial terms.

2. We mention persons or things without naming them—

This is mine. *Who* called just now? *Anyone* can see that *that* is wrong. Only *three* are left. Show me the book *which* you are reading. *Much* of it is very dull. *He* likes *it*, but *few* agree with *him*.

Grammarians distinguish many different kinds of pronouns, but this classification is unimportant for those who are not concerned with the technicalities of grammar. It is desirable, however, for practical purposes to know what Personal Pronouns and Relative Pronouns are. (See separate headings.)

PRONOUNS CARELESSLY USED.

The wrong or vague use of pronouns is one of the faults most commonly committed by the inexperienced

writer. It is always necessary to see that *it, they*, etc., refer to a definite noun, and that they are so placed that the reference is clear.

The most elementary mistake consists in using a plural pronoun to refer to a singular noun, or *vice versa*. E.g.—

> We are sending you particulars of our latest model in the hope that you will be interested. *They* will be obtainable from all our agents in three weeks' time.

The ambiguous use of pronouns is exemplified in the following sentences—

> The state never interferes with a man's soul except to *its* disadvantage. (Does *its* refer to *state* or to *soul*? Good sense is obtained either way.)
>
> The porter explained that he did not think that Mr. Smith left the manager until an hour after *he* had telephoned to the hospital. (Who telephoned?)

The following passage illustrates the vague use of *it*—

> Sir,—The letter from Sir Robert Horne in your issue of 16 April, and Mr. Hacking's in this morning's are of peculiar interest at the present juncture, as the whole question is exercising the minds of the British industry very actively, and it is a matter of great concern for many manufacturers, knowing the position, as to exactly the method by which the situation can best be met. *It* has been most adequately expressed by Sir Robert Horne, and I am in substantial agreement with him. (What does *it* stand for?)

On the careless use of the relative pronoun *which* see WHICH.

PROPER NOUN.

A proper noun is the name of a particular person or thing, e.g. James, London, The Vatican.

PROPOSITION.

This Americanism is being over-worked in present day English. Phrases such as "A sound business proposition," "a tough proposition," "a paying proposition," might well be confined to the colloquial language. The tendency to-day is to substitute *proposition* for a number of other words of varied meanings; e.g.—

> On the whole the British car is better built, and made of more reliable material, and is certainly worth more as a second-hand *proposition* than the foreign car (article, machine).

PROTAGONIST.

The Greek noun from which this word is derived meant the actor who took the chief part in a play. The proper sense to be attached to the English word is the chief person in the plot of a play or story. Largely owing to a mistaken notion that *protagonist* is a kind of opposite to *antagonist*, the former has gained currency in the sense of a leading person in a struggle, a champion or defender; e.g. He was one of the *protagonists* in the mid-nineteenth century struggle for factory regulation. It seems too late to check the spread of this popular use of the word. But it is worth while objecting to one or two other misuses—

1. Since *protagonist* by itself means "*chief* actor," it is manifestly absurd to talk of "the *chief* protagonists."

2. Journalists and others are apt to use *protagonist* loosely without any regard to its true meaning. E.g.—

> Two or three pioneering wheatears have made a descent on the coasts of Devon, thereby corroborating the claim of these birds to be considered the *protagonists* of the myriads of migrants that ere long will

arrive. (Apparently *the first*, or *the forerunners* is intended.)

The *protagonists* of the revised Prayer Book managed their case in the House of Commons with strange lack of dexterity (*advocates*).

PUNCTUATION : GENERAL HINTS.

When a sentence is being written, certain stops or marks of punctuation are inserted to assist the reader to grasp the meaning. These stops indicate where the pauses should come in the reading, and so divide the words into groups according to the sense. The uses of the Full Stop (.), the Comma (,), the Semicolon (;), the Colon (:), the Dash (—), and Inverted Commas (" ") are explained in separate articles. To complete the list of stops we may mention here that the Question Mark (?) is used at the end of direct questions (Are you coming now ?), and that the Exclamation Mark (!) is used after exclamations (Oh ! What a shame !).

General Hints. It will be useful here to supplement the special articles on individual stops with some general advice on punctuation—

1. Although writers conform in the main to certain definite rules, there is no system of punctuation which is or can be rigidly adhered to by everybody. Of course, ordinary sentences dealing with matters of fact can be punctuated strictly according to rule. But the need for latitude arises when the writing is of an abstract or imaginative character. Ideas cannot, like molten metal, be poured into ready-made moulds ; subtle thoughts and feelings require an individual turn of phrase for adequate expression ; and it is here that the writer finds modifications of the regular punctuation valuable.

2. The remarks in the foregoing paragraph are intended merely as an explanation of a fact which

you will have observed for yourself, namely, that all people do not use stops in exactly the same way; but they are not intended to be taken as implying that it does not matter much how you punctuate. If you have to write about everyday affairs or business matters it is most important that you should adopt the recognized system of punctuation and adhere strictly to it. Proper punctuation is one of the means by which clearness of expression is to be attained.

3. Explanations of the use of the various stops necessarily involve a number of grammatical points, and therefore they may seem to you technical and complicated. Unfortunately the subject cannot be freed from technicalities. You need not, however, rely entirely on studying the rules. Observe carefully the punctuation of passages in books and newspapers. Observation of actual examples is quite as valuable as the study of rules.

4. If your punctuation is weak, concentrate first on the full stop and the comma. When you have mastered the correct use of these two stops much more than half the battle is over. The colon is very seldom needed by most people for ordinary purposes. The semicolon is wanted more frequently, but generally no very serious error is committed if it is replaced by a comma or a full stop (according to the nature of the case).

5. One infallible rule is to be observed—*Never put a stop at any place in a sentence unless a pause would be required in the reading.*

6. It is better to under-punctuate than to over-punctuate. The absence of stops will sometimes pass unnoticed, but it is very irritating to a reader to be constantly pulled up by unwanted stops.

QUITE.

This word should be used much more sparingly in

writing than it is in conversation. *Quite* adds little or nothing to the sense in such sentences as—

There was quite a large crowd present.
He received quite a substantial sum of money.
She had quite an overwhelming reception.

The colloquial expression *quite all right* should certainly not be admitted in writing. *Quite* is here completely superfluous, for it means the same as *all*.

REAL.

Real is an adjective and should not be used for the adverb *really*. Incorrect—

REQUIRED, first-class layout Artist for "roughs"; must be capable of executing *real* slick pencil "roughs."

REASON WHY . . . BECAUSE.

The following sentence contains a very common error due to redundancy of expression—

The reason why he left was because he was dissatisfied with his prospects.

Because merely repeats the idea already expressed in *the reason why*. The sentence may be altered to either (1) The reason why he left was *that* he . . ., or (2) He left *because* he . . .

RECIPIENT.

At a dinner held to mark his retirement Mr. —— *was the recipient of* a gold watch.

What justification is there for this favourite journalistic periphrasis for *received*?

RECONCILE.

One is reconciled *with* a person after a quarrel, but one becomes reconciled *to* an unpleasant situation.

REDUNDANCY OF EXPRESSION.

Redundancy of expression (i.e. the use of superfluous words) is always a fault, but it is particularly serious in business documents, which demand, above all, conciseness and precision of statement. Redundancy is sometimes due to sheer verbosity: long roundabout phrases are substituted for the simple, straightforward term. (See CIRCUMLOCUTION.) This article, however, deals with faults arising through the use of words which are quite unnecessary, or which merely repeat an idea expressed elsewhere in the sentence. Grammarians describe these errors under the terms *Pleonasm* and *Tautology*. Some typical examples are collected below—

We are undecided *as to* whether to go. (Omit *as to*.)

I like this *equally as well as* the other. (Omit *equally*.)

He handed in his resignation, *but* he reconsidered his decision, *however*, under pressure from the directors. (Omit *however*.)

Games, *as well as* being a relief to the mind, are *also* beneficial to bodily health. (Omit *also*.)

Fish abound *in great numbers* along the coast. (Omit *in great numbers*.)

There can be no shadow of doubt *but* that the credit of making the first aeroplane which could be flown belongs to Langley. (Omit *but*.)

A *unique* feature *in which Gorton Foundry stands alone* among the locomotive works of Great Britain lies in the possession of its Steel Foundry. (Omit *unique*.)

I feel certain that Hong-Kong, acting in *mutual co-operation* with her great neighbour, will show an increasingly fine record in years to come. (Omit *mutual*: it would be impossible for co-operation not to be mutual.)

Why the results were so poor was *because* there was difficulty in obtaining supplies of raw materials. (The results were so poor because . . .)

The effect of this deterioration was that it had brought about the necessity for sinking the shaft at this pit to the lower 4 ft. seam some few years earlier than had been anticipated. (This deterioration had made it necessary to sink . . ., or, The effect of this deterioration was that it was necessary to sink . . .)

REGARD AS.

(See CONSIDER.)

RELATIVE PRONOUN.

The Relative Pronouns are: *who, which, that, what* (and sometimes *as* and *but*). *Who* has the form *whom* for the accusative case, and *whose* for the genitive. A relative pronoun acts both as a conjunction introducing a clause, and as a pronoun which is the subject or the object of its clause or is governed by a preposition. It is called "relative" because it relates to another noun or pronoun known as its antecedent. Examples—

The traveller *who* called this morning will return this afternoon. (*Who* introduces the clause *who called this morning*, and acts as the subject of the verb *called*.)

The person *whom* he wanted was out. (The relative pronoun is here the object of *wanted*.)

The secretary is the man *to whom* you must apply. (Governed by the preposition *to*.)

Are those the books *which* (or *that*) you require?

The antecedents in the above sentences are: *traveller, person, secretary, books.*

The relative *what* is equal to *that which*, and thus contains its antecedent in itself—*What* he says must be true.

REMONSTRATE.

Pronounced: rĕmŏn'strāte.

Note the correct use of prepositions with this word. We remonstrate *with* a person *on* his conduct. This is the construction commonly employed in modern English. Occasionally the expression to remonstrate *against* something (cp. protest against) is met with.

REPLACE.

(See SUBSTITUTE.)

REPORTED (OR INDIRECT) SPEECH: RULES FOR CONVERTING DIRECT INTO REPORTED SPEECH.

In writing reports of speeches and minutes of meetings it is frequently necessary to present the account in Reported or Indirect Speech; that is to say, the exact words of a speaker (i.e. Direct Speech) are not given, but what he said is reported as by another person who was present, and who writes in the past tense and the third person. The following are illustrations—

DIRECT SPEECH

"These remarks lead me to the matter of the claims made upon our advertisement columns. The demand from advertisers for more and more space continues, and your paper would have been hampered in its progress considerably had we not decided some three years ago to enlarge our printing works. As advertisers increase and their requirements for space extend, so more and more pages will be needed. Newspaper advertising in England is still in its infancy. Many manufacturers are only just beginning to realize its value."

REPORTED (INDIRECT) SPEECH

(The chairman said that) those remarks led him to

the matter of the claims made upon their advertisement columns. The demand from advertisers for more and more space continued, and the company's paper would have been hampered in its progress considerably had they not decided some three years before to enlarge their printing works. As advertisers increased and their requirements for space extended, so more and more pages would be needed. Newspaper advertising in England was still in its infancy. Many manufacturers were only just beginning to realize its value.

Note.—Whereas inverted commas are used to mark Direct Speech, they are not used when the passage is turned into Reported form.

Rules for Converting Direct into Reported Speech

1. It is necessary to supply at the beginning of the passage a leading verb in the past tense—*He said that, The chairman remarked that, Mr.—— held the opinion that,* etc.

2. All verbs in the report must be in past tenses; thus—

speak	is changed to	*spoke*
is speaking	,,	*was speaking*
has spoken	,,	*had spoken*

Similarly—

shall	,,	*should*
will	,,	*would*
may	,,	*might*

3. Pronouns, adjectives, and adverbs that denote nearness in time or position must be changed to words denoting remoteness—

Direct—"*Here* we can see the position to which *these* measures have *now* brought us."

Reported—He said that *there* they could see the position to which *those* measures had *then* brought them.

This is changed to *that, these* to *those, now* to *then, here* to *there, hence* to *thence, last year* to *the year before*, etc.

4. Questions and commands need special treatment in the reported form. Examples—

Direct—(*a*) " Have the preparations been made ? "

(*b*) " Who was responsible for this scheme in the first place ? Who prepared the plans ? Have detailed estimates of the cost been submitted to the committee ? Are you satisfied that your resources will be adequate to the purpose ? "

Reported—(*a*) He asked whether the preparations had been made.

(*b*) He asked who was responsible for that scheme in the first place, and who prepared the plans. Had detailed estimates of the cost been submitted to the committee ? Were they satisfied that their resources would be adequate to the purpose ?

Direct—" Do not deceive yourselves in this matter."

Reported—He begged that they should not deceive themselves in that matter,

or—He urged them not to deceive themselves . . .

or—Let them not deceive themselves . . .

5. Names of people addressed are omitted—

Direct—" It is time, *gentlemen*, that we turned to the balance sheet."

Reported—(He said that) it was time they turned to the balance sheet.

6. When a number of pronouns like *I, he, you, they* are all changed to *he* or *they* in the report, ambiguity often arises. It is then necessary to substitute names for one or more of the pronouns.

Note.—For illustrations of the method of changing

Direct into Indirect Speech the reader should refer to the Parliamentary Reports in *The Times*.

RESIDUARY.

Pronounced : rezĭd'uary.

RESIGN.

There is a growing practice of inserting an unnecessary *from* after *resign* ; e.g. Mr.—— has intimated his intention of resigning *from* his position on the board of directors. The correct idiom is " to resign a position," not " to resign *from* a position."

RESPECTIVE(LY).

Respective and *respectively* provide pitfalls for the unwary. The mistakes made in using them are generally quite gratuitous, for these words are often needlessly inserted. Consider some examples—

1. In connection with the London Borough Council elections it would be interesting to have the *respective* numbers of the men and women voting.

Respective is correctly used here : its purpose is to make it clear that two separate totals are referred to—one for men and one for women.

2. Our principal agents are Messrs. Harper & Co. and Messrs. Yates Bros., who have their premises *respectively* in Oxford Street and Long Acre.

What is the use of *respectively* here ? Is anybody likely to think that the two firms jointly occupy premises in Oxford Street and also in Long Acre ?

3. Six chief selling-agents will be appointed, and each will have his *respective* district assigned to him.

After *each* it is superfluous to add *respective*.

RETAIL—RETAILER.

When *retail* is a verb (he retails leather) the accent is on the second syllable. In other cases (a retail dealer, to sell by retail, etc.), the first syllable is stressed.

Retailer is accented on the second syllable

RHYTHM.

One of the chief marks of good prose is its *rhythmical* quality. Rhythm is, of course, most commonly thought of in connection with verse, in which it appears in its most obvious forms; but prose also has its harmonies as can be seen from a page or two of any of the great authors. Read aloud, for instance, the following well-known passage in which Dr. Johnson described his feelings on seeing the ruins of the monastery at Iona. Notice the balance and the easy flow of individual sentences, and the harmony pervading the whole—

> We were now treading that illustrious Island, which was once the luminary of the Caledonian regions, whence savage clans and roving barbarians derived the benefits of knowledge, and the blessings of religion. To abstract the mind from all local emotion would be impossible, if it were endeavoured, and would be foolish if it were possible. Whatever withdraws us from the power of our senses, whatever makes the past, the distant, or the future, predominate over the present, advances us in the dignity of thinking beings. Far from me, and from my friends, be such frigid philosophy as may conduct us indifferent and unmoved over any ground which has been dignified by wisdom, bravery, or virtue. That man is little to be envied, whose patriotism would not gain force upon the plain of Marathon, or whose piety would not grow warmer among the ruins of Iona.

After reading such passages it becomes clear that

good writing demands something more than grammatical accuracy and clearness of expression, important as these two qualities are. Words, phrases, and clauses should be arranged in such a way that the sentence is pleasant to the ear when read aloud. It should not be imagined that good rhythm is a quality to be aimed at only by writers of great literature: everyday writing is enormously improved when it exhibits not only correctness but grace of expression. An example or two will show how irritating a sentence can be when its rhythm has been destroyed by bad phrasing—

> An outdoor life undoubtedly appeals to boys, and a speedy voyage to Canada, followed by training on a Government prairie farm, with a prospect of subsequently saving £100 by the time they reach 25 to enable them to purchase, under the special terms offered, farms of their own, can hardly fail, when brought to their notice by someone whom they respect, to appeal to healthy, high-spirited boys who have begun to think about their careers.
>
> During all this period, as may be imagined, the people of these Dominions have been trained up, and have become accustomed to, the American vehicle, as, whether they wished to or not—and apart altogether from the merits or otherwise of the vehicles being offered—they practically could not get any products from this country.

These sentences are spoiled by being chopped up into a number of short phrases and clauses and awkward parentheses.

RULE OF PROXIMITY.

The Rule of Proximity states that a word or group of words should be placed near to the word that it refers to. This is only a matter of common sense. When we are reading a sentence we naturally connect in our minds

those words which are in proximity : if the wrong words are placed next to each other, we make the wrong mental connections. Breach of the rule thus causes either obscurity or absurdity. Everybody knows the sort of advertisement (real or faked) which runs—" Piano for sale by a lady with an overstrung frame." This is merely an extreme example of what happens when a phrase referring to one word is placed next to another. Notice how the position of *only* has to be varied in the following sentences—

1. He acted *only* in this play during the season.
2. He *only* acted in this play although he had been asked to produce it as well.

In (1) *only* refers to *in this play*, and in (2) it refers to *acted*.

Some examples of errors due to violation of the Rule of Proximity are given below—

No car could be produced at the present time having twelve minute cylinders in two separate crank-cases and having two crankshafts *at a reasonable cost*. (The last phrase refers to *could be produced*.)

There are no ordinary cheap ticket facilities for those who want to stay one night or two at their destination *except at week-ends*. (Put this phrase at the beginning.)

Dr. Raymond Pearl, professor of Biochemistry and Vital Statistics, John Hopkins University, Baltimore, in a paper printed in *Nature* in January last, gives the results of inquiries conducted by himself and Miss A. L. Bacon at the John Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore, covering a period of 34 years, *which may be of interest*. (The italicized clause refers to *results*. The sentence should be divided into two, with the necessary re-arrangement.)

There is no doubt that the strictest measures are

absolutely still essential, as any sign of weakness would encourage the instigators, to locate all of whom has not yet been possible, *to further efforts*. (*Absolutely* should come before *essential*, and the last phrase should not be separated as it is from *would encourage the instigators*.)

Mistakes of this kind are particularly liable to occur in connection with the Correlative Conjunctions. (See CORRELATIVE CONJUNCTIONS.) Each member of a pair of Correlatives must be placed immediately before the word or group of words to which it relates. Examples of errors—

The result will be *both* beneficial to the heavy steel industry *and* to the consumers of heavy steel products. (Place *both* before *to*. It would be correct to say : both beneficial to the heavy steel industry *and advantageous* to the consumers.)

As an actor he was *not only* good in serious plays *but* in farce. (Place *not only* before *in*.)

The committee came to the conclusion that the project must be *either* abandoned *or* that further financial assistance must be sought. (Write : the conclusion that either the project . . . or further. . .)

He was *not* angry because of my remarks, *but* because his arrangements were upset. (Put *not* before *because*.)

RULES OF AGREEMENT.

There are certain rules governing the agreement of one word with another word in the sentence. They are very important because breaches of them lead to many of the commonest errors in composition—

1. Agreement of a Verb with its Subject.

(*a*) The simple rule is that a verb agrees with its subject in number and person. Thus, in the case of the verb *to be*,

a subject *I* (first person, singular number) is followed by *am*, whereas *they* (third person, plural number) is followed by *are*. When the subject is a collective noun (see COLLECTIVE NOUN) the verb may be either singular or plural according to whether we are thinking of the collection as a whole or of the individual members.—

The crew *was* not large enough for the ship, but—The crew *were* quarrelling among themselves.

Special applications of the rule are now to be noted—

(*b*) When the subject contains two or more nouns or pronouns connected by *and* the verb is plural—

Jones and Robinson *were* there.
He and I *are* partners.

(*c*) When the subject consists of two or more *singular* words connected by *either . . . or, neither . . . nor*, the verb is singular—

Neither he (sing.) nor his partner (sing.) *was present.*

But—

Neither he (sing.) nor his friends (plur.) *were* present.

(*d*) When the subject consists of two or more words of different person, connected by *either . . . or, neither . . . nor*, the verb agrees in person with the nearer—

Neither you (2nd per.) nor I (1st per.) *am* satisfied.

2. **Agreement of Nouns and Pronouns in Case.** A predicative noun or pronoun agrees in case with the word to which it refers. (See CASE and PREDICATIVE WORDS.)—

He (nominative) is the *secretary* (nominative).
It (nominative) is *he* (nominative).

3. **Agreement of Relative Pronoun.** A relative pronoun agrees with its antecedent in number and person, but not in case. (See RELATIVE PRONOUN.)—

Those are the people *who* cause the trouble. (*Who*

agrees with *people* (plur.); hence the plural verb *cause*).

You should not ask me *who* am ignorant of these matters. (*Me* is first person; therefore *who* and *am* are also first person. Note that while *me* is accusative case, *who* is nominative.)

(See ERRORS IN AGREEMENT.)

SALUBRIOUS—SALUTARY

Salubrious means *healthy*, and is nearly always applied to a climate or a place (never to a person). A seaside resort may be described as salubrious.

Salutary means *beneficial*, or *producing good effects*.—The accident taught the motorist a *salutary* lesson. Those who inspired the Factory Acts of the last century were responsible for some of the most *salutary* reforms of that period.

SAME.

The use of *same* or *the same* as a substitute for another pronoun (*it*, *them*, etc.), used to be a regular feature of "Business English"—e.g. We thank you for your order of yesterday, and will give *same* our best attention. This pointless variation from normal English has been condemned by every modern textbook on English composition, but it is still to be met with not only in letters but in business reports; e.g.—

> The necessity for the modernization of stocks to keep abreast of new developments in engineering and the requirements for the housing of *same* have led to the erection of large and well-equipped stock and show rooms in London and Glasgow.

SCARCELY . . . THAN.

(See CONFUSION OF EXPRESSION.)

SEMICOLON.

The semicolon marks a longer pause than is indicated by a comma. The following are its uses—

1. It separates the two parts of a double sentence when the conjunction is omitted. (See DOUBLE SENTENCE, MULTIPLE SENTENCE.)—

> In public life he showed all the sternness and determination in his character; in his family life he was all kindness and consideration.

Compare Section (5) of the article on COMMA.

2. Even when the conjunction is inserted, a semicolon may be used in a double sentence if a longer pause is required than would be indicated by a comma. This use of the semicolon is found frequently in longer sentences—

> There is no direct connection between unemployment and the size of the population; but there is a fundamental connection between the numbers of the people and the standard of life which they can maintain in any given economic environment.
>
> Only a few weeks ago an alteration in the Australian Tariff Law was announced, which increases very materially the preference given to British-made pianos entering the Commonwealth; and, from inquiries received, it is evident that this alteration should prove of substantial benefit to us in the development of our trade in that important market.

3. Sometimes several complete statements closely related in thought are grouped together in one sentence. Semicolons are used to separate them—

> The Prince began to find the study of politics less uninteresting than he had supposed; he read Blackstone, and took lessons in English Law; he was occasionally present when the Queen interviewed her

Ministers; and at Lord Melbourne's suggestion he was shown all the dispatches relating to foreign affairs.

He had conducted an important negotiation with skill and tact; he had been brought into close and friendly relations with the new Prime Minister; it was obvious that a great political future lay before him.

(See PUNCTUATION: GENERAL HINTS.)

SENTENCE.

A sentence is a group of words that makes sense.

Sentences belong to three grammatical types—(1) Simple, (2) Complex, (3) Double or Multiple. See under each heading.

It is essential that a sentence shall have *unity*. It may consist of various parts, but all these parts must relate to a central idea. The following sentence from a daily newspaper lacks unity. The writer of the news item has brought together two incongruous facts in one sentence—

A substantial structure on a hill near the village, the barracks were provided with wireless apparatus, and the garrison, up to last February, consisted of eight men.

SHALL—WILL, SHOULD—WOULD

The simple future tense of, e.g. *to go* is: 1st Person—I, we shall go; 2nd Person—You will go; 3rd Person—He, she, it, they will go. *Shall* is used in the 1st Person, and *will* in the 2nd and 3rd. Sometimes, however, we use *will* in the 1st Person and *shall* in the 2nd or 3rd. It is important to note that in such cases *something more than mere futurity is expressed*: we convey the idea of

determination, of a promise or a threat. The following pairs of sentences make clear the difference—

1st Person—

I *shall* go to-morrow if it is fine. (Mere futurity.)
I have determined that I *will* go to-morrow whether it is fine or not. (Determination.)

2nd Person—

He tells me that you *will* go to-morrow. (Mere futurity.)
You *shall* go abroad with me if your work is satisfactory. (Promise.)

3rd Person—

He *will* go if he has permission. (Mere futurity.)
If his work does not improve, he *shall* not go abroad. (Threat.)

A similar distinction exists in the case of *should* and *would*. To express futurity (with respect to a point of time in the past) we must use *should* in the 1st Person, and *would* in the 2nd or 3rd.—I said that I *should* go the next day; You said that you *would* go the next day; He said that he *would* go the next day. But note the difference in meaning when *would* replaces *should* and *vice versa*—

I said that I *would* go the next day whatever happened. (Determination.)
I said that he *should* go with me if he really desired it. (Promise.)

This matter has been explained at some length because of the numerous mistakes which are made through disregard of the rule. The trouble arises partly because Scottish, Irish, and some provincial speakers tend naturally to confuse *shall* and *will*; but this

does not explain the apparently wanton errors that so frequently occur. Examples—

If you will let us know your requirements we *will* be glad to send you specimens of our products (*shall*).

I am having inquiries made, and *will* have much pleasure in informing you of the result (*shall*).

When I addressed you a year ago I expressed the feeling that for the year 1927 I *would* be able to report that our business had been well maintained (*should*).

We have now secured premises at an annual cost considerably less than the rental which we *would* have had to face on a renewal of our lease (*should*).

One other point remains. If *shall* (or *will*) is used in a main clause, it should not be followed by *should* (or *would*) in the subordinate clause. Incorrect—We *shall* be very pleased if you *would* let us have a reply by return. (We shall . . . if you will, or, We should . . . if you would.)

SIMPLE SENTENCE.

A Simple Sentence is one that contains only one subject and predicate. (See COMPLEX SENTENCE; DOUBLE SENTENCE, MULTIPLE SENTENCE; SUBJECT AND PREDICATE.)

SINECURE.

Pronounced: sī′nēcure.

SINGULAR NUMBER.

(See NUMBER.)

SLOGAN.

This word has recently been seized by journalists and advertising agents and popularized in the sense of *motto*,

maxim, watchword. It is too late now to raise any objection, but it may be of interest to note that the true meaning of the word is *a Highland war-cry.* The recent senses are not mentioned in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* (Eighth Impression, 1921). Knowledge of the proper signification of *slogan* may prevent further illegitimate extension of its meaning.

SPEED UP.

The verb *to speed up* has become so popular that many people are apt to forget that we have an older established and more elegant word, viz., *to accelerate.*

SPELLING: CHIEF RULES; WORDS FREQUENTLY MISSPELT.

This article is designed to do what is possible for weak spellers. If you are one of those unfortunate people, you will no doubt obtain some assistance from the rules given below. But you will still have considerable difficulty, because many words do not come under these rules, and many others are exceptions to the rules that seem to apply. There is really nothing for it but to make for yourself a list of the words that you find you misspell, and then set yourself somehow to learn the correct spelling. (As a protest against this drudgery you can, of course, join the Simplified Spelling Society, which will easily convince you that English spelling adds insult to injury by being thoroughly irrational as well as most difficult to learn.) For most people the best way is to write out the difficult word a number of times until they form a clear mental picture of the word which can be reproduced automatically. A few people have an aural memory: for them it is useful to spell the word aloud until they know it. A list of words commonly misspelt is given on pages 156-158; you should add any others that give you trouble.

Spelling Rules.

1. Words of one syllable ending in a single consonant preceded by a single vowel-letter double the consonant before a suffix—

dim, dimmer ; jar, jarred ; mad, madden.

2. A similar doubling takes place in words of more than one syllable if they end in a single consonant preceded by a single vowel-letter, *and if the accent is on the final syllable*—

acquit, acquitted ; compel, compelling ; defer, deferred.

3. This doubling does not take place (*a*) when the final consonant is preceded by two vowel-letters, and (*b*) when the accent is not on the last syllable. (But see Rule (4))—

(*a*) appeal, appealing ; exceed, exceeded ; contain, container.

(*b*) bigot, bigoted ; combat, combatant ; limit, limiting.

4. Whatever the position of the accent, final *l* is doubled, and in the case of final *s* usage varies—

cancel, cancelled ; jewel, jeweller ; label, labelled ; marvel, marvellous ; control, controlled.

bias, biased or biassed ; focus, focusing or focussing.

5. Adverbs formed by adding *-ly* to adjectives ending in *-l* or *-ll* always contain a double *l*—

beautiful, beautifully ; dull, dully ; frugal, frugally.

6. A double *n* occurs in nouns formed by adding *-ness* to adjectives ending in *-n*—

common, commonness ; stern, sternness ; stubborn, stubbornness.

A double *n* also occurs in words formed by adding the prefixes *un-*, *en-*, *in-* to roots beginning with *n-* —

necessary, unnecessary; noble, ennoble; numerable, innumerable.

Those words in which the prefix *in-* is modified to *il-*, *ir-*, or *im-* have a double consonant—

legal, illegal; regular, irregular; mediate, immediate.

A double *s* occurs in those words formed by adding the prefix *dis-* to a root beginning with *s-* —

satisfied, dissatisfied; similar, dissimilar.

But note the single *s* in—disappear, disappoint.

7. Words ending in silent *-e* drop the *e* before a suffix beginning with a vowel, but not before one beginning with a consonant—

move, movable, but—movement; blame, blamable, but—blameless; excite, exciting, but—excitement.

Exceptions.—Words in which the silent *-e* is preceded by *c* or *g* retain the *e* before a vowel in order that the *c* and the *g* may not lose their soft sound—

advantage, advantageous; notice, noticeable.

8. Words ending in *-y* preceded by a consonant change *y* into *i* before a suffix—

lady, ladies; cry, cried; penny, penniless; vary, variable.

(But note—chimney, chimneys; journey, journeys. The *y* is preceded by a vowel-letter.)

Exceptions.—If the suffix begins with *i* the *y* remains—

try, trying; copy, copyist.

9. In words containing *ei* or *ie* with the sound *ē* (as in receive, believe) *i* comes before *e* except after *c*—

believe, chief, achieve, piece, relieve, retrieve, etc., but—receive, perceive, receipt, ceiling, etc.

Exceptions—

seize, weir, weird, counterfeit, inveigle ;

and also proper names, e.g. Madeira, Leith.

10. On the question of *-ize* and *-ise* see -IZE OR -ISE.

11. On the proper use of the apostrophe, see GENITIVE PROBLEMS.

12. The American practice of using *-or* instead of *-our* in certain words (e.g. labor, favor) should not be followed.

List of Words Frequently Misspelt.

Note.—1. The words which give most trouble are marked with an asterisk.

2. Words belonging to the following groups should be noted and compared—(*a*) those ending in *-able*, *-ible* ; (*b*) those ending in *-ant*, *-ent*, *-ance*, *-ence* ; (*c*) those ending in *-ence*, *-ense* ; (*d*) those ending in *-al*, *-le* ; (*e*) those beginning with *acq-*, *aq-* ; (*f*) those containing *-ceed*, *-cede* ; (*g*) those containing *-eem*, *-eme* ; (*h*) those words which are pronounced alike but which are spelt differently according to their meaning or to the part of speech to which they belong.

abridgement, or—abridgment
abscess
accede
accelerate
accessible
accessory
*accommodate
*accumulate
*achieve
acknowledgement, or—acknowledgment
*acquaintance
*acquiesce
acquitted
adjustable
admissible
adolescent
*advantageous
advice (noun)
advise (verb)
advisability
aerial
*aeroplane
*agreeable
argument
all right (not—alright)
allotted
already
annihilate
anonymous
antecedent
appalling
*arctic
ascendancy, or—ascendency
ascendant, or—ascendent
assassinate
assessable
autumn
auxiliary
*battalion
*beginning
*believe
*beneficial
*benefited
besiege
biassed, or—biased
bigot
*bigoted
Britain (country)

List of Words—(*contd.*)

Briton (person)
*Britannia
*Brittany
*business
calendar
canvas (noun)
canvass (verb)
cellar
changeable
chaos
chargeable
circuit
commemorate
*committee
*comparatively
compatible
complement (that which completes)
compliment (expression of praise or regard)
concession
concurrence
confidant (noun)
confident (adj.)
connoisseur
conscientious
*conscious
consistency
*correspondence
correspondent
corroborate
council (a body of people)
counsel (advice, legal adviser)
decease (death)
*deceive
*deferred
deficiency
dense
dependant (noun)
dependent (adj.)
descendant
*develop
*development
device (noun)
devise (verb)
diphthong
*disappear
*disappoint
discernible
discreet
disease
dispense
*dissatisfied
dissimilar
eccentric
efficacious
eligible
*embarrass
emigrant
enrolment
esteem
*exaggerate
excrescence
exigency
existence
*exorbitant
expense
experience
*extravagant
fascinate
favourite
forestall
*fulfil
fulfilled
*fulfilment
*gauge
*government
grievance
guarantee
*harass
hideous
honorary
humorist
humorous
identical
illegible
immigrant
imminent
immovable
incoherent
incorrigible
indefensible
indictment
*ineligible
*inexhaustible
inflammable
innocuous
*inoculate
insistence
install
instalment
intense
irreducible
irrelevant
irresistible
itinerary
judgement, or—judgment
*keenness
leisure
*livelihood
manageable
manoeuvre
Mediterranean
meteorological
millennium
*miniature
miscellaneous
*mischievous
misdemeanour
monastery
movable
murmur
naphtha
*necessary
negligible
neighbouring
noticeable
nuisance
*occasionally
*occurred
*occurrence
palate (roof of mouth)
palette (colour plate)
paraffin
*parallel
*paralleled
Parliament

LIST OF WORDS—(*contd.*)

*pavilion
peaceable
perforate
permissible
Philip
piece
plebeian
pneumatic
poignant
*possession
*practice (noun)
*practise (verb)
*precede
*preferred
prejudice
primitive
*principal (chief,—adj. and noun)
*principle (law,—noun)
*privilege
proceed
*procedure
*profession
proffered
prophecy (noun)
prophesy (verb)
promissory
psychological
purchase
pursue
*quarrelled
queue
recede
*receipt
*receive
recommend
recompense
reconnoitre
reference
*referred
*regrettable
relevant
relieve
reminiscent
remodelled
reprieve
resistance
resistible
reticent
retrieve
reversible
rhyme
rhythm
sagacious
*saleable
*scene
scheme
secede
sedentary
*seize
seizure
sense
*separate
sergeant
serviceable
*siege
simultaneous
*sincerely
*skilful
*soliloquy
stationary (motionless)
stationery (writing material)
stereotype
subterranean
succeed
successful
superintendent
*supersede
survivor
technical
*traceable
tranquillity
*transferred
tyrannical
*undoubtedly
*unnecessary
*unparalleled
*until
vaccinate
vacillate
vertical
vicissitude
*weird
wield
*woollen
worshipped

SPLIT INFINITIVE.

(See INFINITIVE.)

The so-called split infinitive occurs when an adverb or a phrase is inserted between the *to* and the verb. The following are examples—

I want now *to* especially *direct* your attention to the item "depreciation, including renewals, upkeep, and repairs."

The board have now decided *to* practically *reconstruct* the factory.

Some people make a great deal of fuss about this little point and are ready to condemn as illiterate anybody who splits an infinitive. Of course, there are extreme cases where the practice is unpardonable, e.g. I want you *to* as fully as possible *appreciate* the point at issue : this is obviously very clumsy. But no serious offence against elegance seems to be committed in the examples given above. Sometimes the avoidance of the splitting produces a more clumsy construction than the splitting would have done. E.g.—

> In December last I again returned *further to examine* the cause, and was astonished to find that a green haze of sprouting weeds carpeted the embankment.

Here it would be much less awkward to say *to further examine.* In the present state of opinion, however, in spite of the weakness of the case against the split infinitive, the novice in writing may be counselled to avoid this construction, lest it be thought that he knows no better.

It is to be observed that the passive infinitive is made up of the infinitive *to be* and a past participle, and it is not split if an adverb comes between *be* and the participle. *To be carefully considered* is not a split infinitive, but *to carefully be considered* is.

STATIONARY—STATIONERY.

Stationary is the adjective meaning *motionless,* and *stationery* is the noun meaning *writing material.*

STOPS.

(See PUNCTUATION, and separate articles under the headings of the various stops.)

SUBJECT AND PREDICATE.

A sentence states a complete thought about a person or thing. Every sentence can therefore be logically

divided into two main parts—(1) the words which name the person or thing about which something is said, i.e. the Subject ; (2) the words which say something about the person or thing, i.e. the Predicate. Thus the short sentence " Prices are rising " has *prices* as the subject (it names what we are talking about) and *are rising* as the predicate (these words say something about prices).

Longer sentences may be similarly divided—

Subject	*Predicate*
Many of his clients	have now left the district.
A new manager	will be appointed very shortly.
The main cause of the dissatisfaction	was the high-handed action of the secretary.

For grammatical purposes the subject and the predicate of such sentences can be sub-divided into other parts, but for the present it is sufficient to note that the subject always contains a noun or noun-equivalent (*many, manager, cause*), which may be called the subject-word, and that the predicate always contains a verb (*have left, will be appointed, was*). The predicate often contains an Object or Predicative Words : these are explained in separate articles.

The sentences so far considered have been Simple ; i.e. they contain only one subject and predicate. Many sentences, however, contain within themselves groups of words each of which has its own subject and predicate. E.g.—

Subject	*Predicate*
Many of his clients *who supported him for many years*	have now left the district *because the train service is so bad.*

The group of words *who . . . years* has a subject *who* and predicate *supported him for many years* ; the group

because . . . bad contains a subject *the train service*, and a predicate *is so bad*. (See CLAUSES ; COMPLEX SENTENCE ; DOUBLE SENTENCE, MULTIPLE SENTENCE.)

SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD: MODERN USAGE.

(See MOOD.)

The subjunctive mood was employed very widely in older English, but for several centuries it has been gradually dropping out of use in the ordinary language, though it has been retained to a large extent in the language of poetry. Except in a few special cases the subjunctive in twentieth century English prose seems either archaic or affected. We are familiar with such old uses as "Except the Lord *build* the house, their labour is but lost that build it," and "If the salt *have* lost his savour, wherewithal shall it be salted?" But to-day we should use the indicative in both cases—"Unless the Lord *builds* . . ." "If the salt *has* lost. . ."

Modern Uses of the Subjunctive—

1. *In Simple Sentences and Main Clauses—*

In modern English main verbs are found in the subjunctive only in a few stereotyped expressions which have survived in their old form ; e.g.—Long *live* the king ; God *save* the king ; *Come* what may ; *Be* that as it may.

2. *In Subordinate Clauses—*

(*a*) After a verb of wishing—

I wish he *were* here ; I wish it *were* all over.

(In vulgar language the indicative *was* is found in these sentences.)

(*b*) In stating a supposition that is not likely to be fulfilled—

If only he *were* here we should soon overcome our difficulties.

(But the implication is that he cannot be here.)

Notice the difference between the meanings of the following—

If that *were* true I should be sorry (Subj.).

If that *is* true I am sorry (Indic.).

In the first case we imply that the supposition is false ; in the second we leave it an open question whether the supposition is true or not.

(*c*) Sometimes after *though*—

We do not think it likely that prices will fall even though the number of imported cars *be* reduced by the imposition of a duty.

The second clause means : even on the supposition that . . ., and the implication is that no reduction has yet occurred. If we substituted the indicative *is reduced* the meaning would be : even in spite of the fact that . . ., and we should imply that a reduction has actually taken place.

(*d*) Sometimes after *lest*—

He will meet them lest it *be* thought that he is unwilling to compromise.

(*e*) Sometimes after an impersonal verb, i.e. a verb having the indefinite *it* as subject—

It is requested that the full name and address of the applicant *be* written in block capitals.

Wrong or Unnecessary Uses. Many people seem to think that they can give what they would no doubt call " a literary touch " to their writing by introducing subjunctives where, in their less inspired moments, they would use the indicative. The result is mere affectation, if not actual incorrectness. Examples—

I question if there *be* amongst birds of prey of the commoner order a greater miscreant than the sparrow-hawk (is).

Whether the film *be* judged to be inspiring or degrading is immaterial to the argument (is).

It is common knowledge that watches are apt to go (or stop) according to the personality of the wearers, whether they *be* worn in the old-fashioned pocket or on the new-fangled wrist (are).

Government must be admired if it *persuade* man to some degree of orderliness, if it *induce* among nations behaviour slightly better than that of tigers or wolves.

(The subjunctives here are wrong as well as being affected. The conditions are not stated as being unlikely or impossible to be fulfilled.)

There is no reason why the subjunctive should be used any more frequently in written prose to-day than it is in good conversation.

SUBSIDENCE.

The Oxford English Dictionary recognizes two pronunciations—sudsī'dence, and sub'sidence, of which it prefers the first. The present day tendency, however, is strongly in favour of the second, and this is the only pronunciaton given by *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*.

SUBSTITUTE.

The idiomatic uses of the verbs *to substitute* and *to replace* are often confused. We may say either: The firm will *substitute* new typewriters *for* the old ones, or—The firm will *replace* the old typewriters *by* new ones. It is wrong to say: The firm will *substitute* the old typewriters *by* new ones.

SUCH.

There is a use of *such* in place of *that, it, them,* etc., which must be condemned as most inelegant. Examples—

In these circumstances I think I have a claim against the railway, but the company refuses to recognize *such* (it).

Though we may lament the butchery which is the sparrow-hawk's means of life, *such* is hardly a reason for blind and illogical vituperation of the economy which regulates and is bound up with its destiny (that).

Sir Arthur says, in effect, that, unable to find evidence of the existence of the soul as distinct from the body, he and his friends are reluctantly forced to the conclusion that *such* does not exist, and that death is the end of all things. (*Such* is here not only inelegant but ambiguous.)

SUCH-LIKE.

The use of *such-like* is vulgar, and should be avoided. Examples—

The hall was filled with shop-keepers, artisans, and *such-like* (and the like, or—and such people).

It was the claim of the ferry service that they were in a position to offer facilities to the British manufacturer and exporter of pottery and *such-like* goods. (similar).

SUPERIOR.

Superior must be followed by *to* and not *than*. Incorrect—

The facilities provided by the larger stores are far superior in all respects *than* those offered by the small shops (to).

SUPERLATIVE DEGREE.

(See DEGREES OF COMPARISON.)

SYCOPHANT.

Pronounced: sĭck'ophant.

SYNCOPE.

Pronounced: sĭn'copē.

SYNONYMS.

Synonyms are words which have very nearly the same meaning. It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to find any two English words which are exactly synonymous. Words which at first sight seem to be identical in signification are seen on further examination to be distinguished by some shade of meaning or some point of usage. A consideration of the three synonyms, *brief*, *concise*, *laconic*, will illustrate the differences to be looked for in the members of such a group. The following sentences exemplify the uses of the three words—

1. His interview with the manager was very *brief*.
2. Although his speech was *brief* he did not succeed in giving a *concise* account of the proposed scheme.
3. In reply to my long and earnest appeal that he would give us his assistance he gave me the *laconic* answer, "No, I won't."

Clearly both *concise* and *laconic* suggest more than *brief*. *Concise* applies to writing or speaking, and suggests condensation and neatness of expression. *Laconic* includes the further notion of curtness and abruptness; it would not be suitable in sentence (2) for it applies only to single remarks. Sentence (2) shows that a speech may be brief without being concise, although brevity is the usual accompaniment of conciseness. Neither *concise* nor *laconic*, of course, could replace *brief* in sentence (1).

The above words are not difficult to differentiate. Other synonyms, however, are so nearly alike that very careful analysis is needed to make clear the distinctions. We often feel the special shade of meaning attached to a particular word and consequently prefer this word to its synonym, even when we should be puzzled to give a reason for our preference. How many people without special consideration and reference to dictionaries could

explain the differences between *effective, effectual, efficacious, efficient?* These words are the subject of a special article.

So far we have insisted on the differences between synonyms. The fact that in many cases synonyms are interchangeable is sufficiently obvious. We can speak of a man's business as being either *profitable* or *lucrative*: the sense is the same with either word. (But we can describe, e.g. a conversation as *profitable*, although the adjective *lucrative* would be quite unsuitable.)

One of the chief requirements of those who would write well is the ability to distinguish between words that resemble each other in meaning. Precision of expression is impossible without a nice appreciation of shades of meaning and a feeling for idiom. These qualities are to be acquired only by wide reading of good literature. The study of the dictionary and of books of synonyms, is, of course, valuable; but it should be only subsidiary to reading.

TAUTOLOGY.

(See REDUNDANCY OF EXPRESSION.)

TECHNICAL JARGON.

(See OBSCURITY.)

TENSE.

A Tense is a form of a verb which indicates three things—

1. *Time.* An action may be described as taking place in the Past, the Present, or the Future—

I walked; I walk; I shall walk.

These forms are the Simple Past, the Simple Present, and the Simple Future Tenses.

2. *Continuance.* We may speak of an action as being

in progress for some time in the Past, the Present, or the Future—

I was walking ; I am walking ; I shall be walking.

These forms are called the Past Continuous (or Imperfect), the Present Continuous (or Imperfect), and the Future Continuous (or Imperfect) Tenses.

3. *Completion.* An action may be described as completed at some point of time in the Past, the Present, or the Future—

I had walked ; I have walked ; I shall have walked.

These forms are called the Past Perfect, the Present Perfect, and the Future Perfect Tenses. (" Perfect " mean " finished, completed.")

Sometimes a verb denotes an action that is about to take place after some point of time in the past—

I expected that I *should walk* ten miles in the afternoon.

This tense is called the Future in the Past. It may have a Continuous form (*should be walking*) and a Perfect form (*should have walked*).

THAN.

Mistakes are often made through the use of the wrong form of a pronoun after *than* ; e.g. He seems to be much older than *me*. *Than* is not a preposition and should not therefore be followed by an accusative case. (See CASE.) It introduces a clause of comparison of which the verb is suppressed (as it is usually in such clauses). But if this verb is supplied (than I *am*) it is at once seen that the pronoun should be *I* (nominative case, subject to *am*). *Me* would be correct in the sentence—He likes you better than (he likes) *me*. The pronoun is here the object of the understood verb.

THE.

(See ARTICLES.)

THESE (THOSE) KIND OF THINGS.

The expression "I do not like *these kind* of things" contains a curious error. *Kind* is obviously a singular word, yet it is qualified by a plural adjective *these*. We ought to say *this kind of thing*, or *things of this kind*. But the expressions *these kind*, *those sort*, are so commonly used even by educated people that perhaps they should be accepted as established idioms.

THUS, AND A PRESENT PARTICIPLE.

The electric light failed, *thus causing* great inconvenience.

On the slovenly use of the present participle in such sentences as this see UNRELATED PARTICIPLES.

TITLES: SPECIAL FORMS OF ADDRESS AND SALUTATION.

In the case of letters written to persons of title or rank special forms of address and salutation are required for the letter-heading. A selected list of these forms is given below—

MEMBER OF THE ROYAL FAMILY. *Address:* His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, or—His Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester. *Salutation:* Your Royal Highness.

DUKE. *Address:* His Grace the Duke of ——. *Salutation:* My Lord, or—Your Grace.

DUCHESS. *Address:* Her Grace the Duchess of ——. *Salutation:* My Lady, or—Madam.

MARQUIS. *Address:* The Most Honourable the Marquis of——. *Salutation:* My Lord Marquis.

MARCHIONESS. *Address:* The Most Honourable the Marchioness of ——. *Salutation:* My Lady.

EARL or COUNTESS. *Address:* The Right Honourable the Earl (Countess) of ——. *Salutation:* My Lord (My Lady).

VISCOUNT. *Address:* The Right Honourable the Viscount——. *Salutation:* My Lord.

BARON. *Address :* The Right Honourable Lord ——. *Salutation :* My Lord.

BARONET. *Address :* Sir Harley Staples, Bart. *Salutation :* Sir.

KNIGHT. *Address :* Sir Walter Raleigh. *Salutation :* Sir.

LORD CHANCELLOR. *Address :* The Right Honourable the Lord Chancellor. *Salutation :* My Lord.

LORD CHIEF JUSTICE. *Address :* The Right Honourable the Lord Chief Justice. *Salutation :* My Lord.

JUDGE. *Address :* The Honourable Mr. Justice ——, or (if a knight)—The Honourable Sir Harcourt Riley. *Salutation :* Sir. (A County Court Judge is addressed as "His Honour.")

PRIVY COUNCILLOR. The Right Honourable David Farmer, P.C. *Salutation :* Sir.

LORD MAYOR OF LONDON OR YORK. *Address :* The Right Honourable the Lord Mayor of ——. *Address :* My Lord, or—My Lord Mayor. (Of the Lord Mayors only those of London and York are entitled to the prefix "Right Honourable.")

MAYOR. *Address :* The Worshipful the Mayor of ——. *Salutation :* Sir.

LORD PROVOST AND PROVOST. The forms of address for these Scottish officials correspond to those for Lord Mayor and Mayor.

ALDERMAN. *Address :* Mr. Alderman Jones.

COUNCILLOR. *Address :* Mr. Councillor Jones.

ARCHBISHOP. *Address :* The Most Rev. the Lord Archbishop of ——. *Salutation :* My Lord Archbishop, or—Your Grace.

CARDINAL. *Address :* His Eminence Cardinal ——, or (if an archbishop)—His Eminence the Cardinal Archbishop of ——. *Salutation :* Your Eminence.

BISHOP. *Address :* The Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of ——. *Salutation :* My Lord.

DEAN. *Address :* The Very Rev. the Dean of ——. *Salutation :* Sir.

ARCHDEACON. *Address :* The Ven. Archdeacon of ——. *Salutation :* Sir.

CLERGYMAN. *Address :* Rev. T. G. Parsons, or (if the Christian name or initials are not known)—Rev. Mr. Parsons. (Never : Rev. Parsons.) *Salutation :* Rev. Sir, or—Sir.

TRANSITIVE VERB.

A Transitive Verb is one that is followed by an object ; e.g. The firm *pays* the wages. (See OBJECT, DIRECT AND INDIRECT.) An Intransitive Verb denotes an action that is not performed on an object ; e.g. The engine *runs* well.

Some verbs can be either transitive or intransitive

according to the sentence in which they are used; e.g.—

His duties *begin* to-morrow (intrans.);
He *begins* work to-morrow (trans.).

TRANSPIRE.

It is a common error to use *transpire* as though it meant *happen*; e.g.—

> The manager of the club was instructed to lay before the members of the board a full statement of what had *transpired* and invite them to deal with the case.

The true meanings of the word are *breathe through, become known*. It is correctly used in the following—

> After some hours it *transpired* that the king had secretly left the palace in a closed car.

UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES.

There are people who object to the expression *under the circumstances* on the ground that it is foolish to talk of being beneath (under) something which is round (circum-) you. The correct phrase is, they say, *in the circumstances*. The objectors lose sight of the fact that *under* does not always mean *beneath*: its other sense is seen in the phrases: under sentence of death; to be under a delusion; to be under an obligation, under examination, under repair, etc. In all these cases the notion of pressure is present. In the same way we may legitimately think of circumstances as exerting a pressure which influences actions in a certain direction. *Under these circumstances* is therefore just as good an idiom as *under these conditions*.

UNIQUE.

A thing is unique when it is the *only one of its kind*. If, therefore, we use this adjective in its true sense it

will only seldom be applicable. Further, we ought not to speak of something as *very* unique, or *rather* unique. A thing is either unique or it is not, just as it may be either first or not first: there can be no degrees of "uniqueness" or "firstness."

UNLESS AND UNTIL.

There can be no hope of a revival of trade *unless and until* the crushing burden of taxation is lightened.

This popular use of *unless and until* is open to the same objection as applies to *if and when*. (See under that heading.)

UNRELATED PARTICIPLES.

The error of the unrelated participle is a very common one—largely because it involves a point of grammar that is not obvious to those who lack a grammatical training. It is necessary first of all to understand the nature of participles. (See PARTICIPLES.)

Consider the following sentences—

1. *Turning* the corner by the church, it is only two minutes' walk to the station.

2. *Bronzed* by the heat of the Italian sun, ours was indeed a life of health and pleasure.

In (1) *turning* is a present participle introducing an adjective-phrase which should relate to a noun or pronoun. What was turning? Not *it*, nor *station*. Clearly it is a person who turns. But no person is mentioned. The sentence would be right if we said: Turning the corner by the church, *we* (or *you*) have only a short walk. . .

In (2) there is a past participle *bronzed* introducing a phrase. What was bronzed?—We were. Therefore the second part of the sentence should read: *we* were indeed living a life of health and pleasure.

Some other examples of the error—

Having worked for nine years in an industrial area, my experience is that not one patient in a thousand fails to consult the panel doctor in case of illness.

(The *experience* has not worked. Write : *I* have found that . . .)

Before the building of this foundry all steel castings had to be obtained from outside firms, often *resulting* in very serious delays.

(To what previous noun does *resulting* relate ? Eliminate the participle, and write : so that serious delays were often caused.)

The slipshod use of participles is particularly common with *thus* and *thereby* ; e.g.—

All typescript is carefully checked with your original MS., *thus ensuring* absolute accuracy.

(*Ensuring* is not related to a previous noun. Write : *We* carefully check all typescript with your original MS., thus ensuring . . ., or eliminate the participle and recast.)

Our staff has been reduced to a minimum, *thereby securing* the utmost economy in working.

(Write : By reducing our staff to the minimum we have secured . . .)

VAGARY.

Pronounced : văgār'y.

VAGRANT.

Pronounced : vā'grant.

VERB.

A verb is a word by means of which something is said about a person or thing. It is the essential part

of the predicate of every sentence. (See SUBJECT AND PREDICATE.)

A verb denotes either—(1) an Action, e.g. Rain *falls*; The boat *is sailing* to-morrow; The clerk *has posted* the letter;

or (2) a State, e.g. He *is* the captain; They *seem* very friendly; He *did* not *appear* happy.

From the above examples it will be observed that a verb-form often includes more than one word. (See AUXILIARY VERB and PARTICIPLES.)

VERBOSITY.

(See REDUNDANCY OF EXPRESSION.)

VERY AND PAST PARTICIPLES.

The following sentences are wrong—

He was *very* surprised by the news.
They were all *very* annoyed by what occurred.
I shall be *very* concerned to hear the result.

Much or *very much* should be used in each case. It is not easy to give a simple rule to explain when *very* is permissible with a past participle. Everybody will recognize, however, that whereas *very* is unidiomatic in the above sentences, it could be quite correctly used in—

His face wore a very surprised, or very annoyed, or very concerned expression.

Here the participles *surprised, annoyed, concerned,* are used as pure adjectives qualifying the noun *expression*: in the original sentences they were used with the auxiliary verbs *was, were, shall be,* in a compound verb-form. The distinction thus depends on the double nature of participles. (See PARTICIPLES.) When a participle is used like an ordinary adjective it may be preceded by

very alone ; when it is used in a compound verb-form *much* or *very much* is required.

VICE VERSA.

The first word is pronounced : vī'sē.

VISA.

Pronounced : vē'za.

VOICE.

A verb is said to be in the Active Voice when the person or thing named by the subject performs the action ; e.g.—

The journalist *interviewed* the principal actors.

A verb is said to be in the Passive Voice when the person or thing named by the subject undergoes or suffers the action, e.g.—

The principal actors *were interviewed* by the journalist.

WAIVE—WAVE.

To waive means *to forbear to insist on ; to make a tacit surrender of a right, claim,* etc.—

In consideration of the compensation now offered the company is prepared to *waive* its claim for the use of this site.

It now appears that he is prepared to *waive* the condition which he originally made regarding his acceptance of a directorship.

The verb *wave* is required in the following—

Public opinion is becoming loud on this matter, and the Government cannot *wave aside* the demand as of no consequence.

The older writers often spelt both verbs *wave,* but

the distinction between the two should be carefully observed in modern English.

WHICH.

When used as a relative pronoun, *which* should always have a definite antecedent. (See RELATIVE PRONOUN.) The following sentence is faulty—

The electric light failed, *which* caused great inconvenience.

What previous noun does *which* stand for? Not *light*. It was the *failure* which caused the inconvenience; but this noun is not used. The pronoun *which* is, in fact, made to refer to the whole of the preceding clause. Sentences of this type will pass in conversation, but they should not be admitted in writing.

WHO, WHOM.

For examples of *who* wrongly used for *whom* and *vice versa* see ERRORS IN CASE.

WILL.

(See SHALL—WILL, SHOULD—WOULD.)

WITH A VIEW TO—WITH THE VIEW OF.

Note that the first of these two idioms contains *to* (not *of*), and it should be followed by a verb-form ending in *-ing*, e.g. with a view to *carrying* out several improvements. Avoid—

1. With a view *of* carrying out several improvements.
2. With a view to *carry* out several improvements.

There is another idiom—*with the view of*. (Note that this contains *the*, not *a*)—

He went to London with the view of consulting his solicitors. (See IDIOM.)

WITHOUT

There are two colloquial uses of *without* which should not appear in writing—

1. *Without* used for *unless* to introduce a clause of condition—

> We cannot reduce our prices *without* we make certain of obtaining a constant supply of raw materials at lower rates.

2. *Without hardly*—

> A new company has taken over the business *without hardly* making any changes in the personnel.

(Write : and has made hardly any changes. . . .)

WOULD

(See SHALL—WILL, SHOULD—WOULD.)

WRITE YOU.

It is normal English to say : I will write you a letter, but it is unidiomatic to say : I will write you about the matter to-morrow. *To you* is required in the second case.

The use of *write you* instead of *write to you* is very common in business correspondence, but there seems no reason for tolerating this departure from common usage ; it might well go the way of the other old-fashioned business phrases which are generally being eliminated by the more progressive firms to-day. (See "BUSINESS ENGLISH.")

YOU AND I

Many people whose grammatical sense is weak, and who appear to think that there is a peculiar refinement attaching to *you and I*, use this expression on all occasions, even when *you and me* would be correct. Which

of the two phrases is right depends on the question of case. (See CASE.)

You and I should be *you and me* in the following—

He will blame you and I for what has happened.

(*I* is an object of the verb *will blame* ; the accusative case *me* is therefore required.)

The communications were sent to you and I at the same time.

(*I* is governed by the preposition *to* ; again the accusative *me* is needed.)

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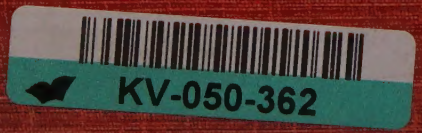
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